

**Effect of Cross Border Trade on Food Security  
Towards Sustainable Food Security in Central West Africa**

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**Abstract**

*Informal cross border trade is an important feature of border towns and villages in Africa. Farmers do not only sell their produce across the border, but they also import goods which the local markets do not provide. In spite of the importance of border trade in terms of marketing agricultural produce, there are two divergent views about the impact of cross border trade on agricultural production. The first view is argues that cross border trade expands markets for agricultural commodities, especially food crops, thereby raising producer prices and encouraging agricultural investment. The other view, expressed by researchers suggests that cross border trade has a negative effect on agricultural production in rural areas. They note that cross border trade worsens terms of trade available to small scale farmers owing to serious resource limitations peculiar to this category of farmer, which force them into disadvantageous timing of sales and purchases, and limit their access to more advantageous markets. For example, it was observe in Nigeria that domination of cross border trade by indigenous trading networks render such trade better adapted to local conditions and more responsive to the needs of people at the grassroots. However they point out that structural adjustment policies that have encouraged the integration of grain markets have tended to undermine grain production among the majority of smallholders in grain surplus areas of Nigeria, mainly because of their low resource levels. Yet informal cross border trade flourishes along Ghana's borders even though the country has gone through several phases of structural adjustment to the extent that public officials have expressed concern about the effect of border trade on domestic food supplies.*