



Household Dietary Diversification and Food Consumption Patterns in Herder Households in the West Gonja Municipality of Ghana



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Introduction

The herder community, comprising largely of Fula/Fulbe tribe known as Fulanis, is one of the marginalised groups in Ghana with scant research attention and recognition despite leading roles in cattle production and milk and soft cheese supply. This study investigated the dietary diversity and food consumption patterns among herder households in five communities in the West Gonja Municipality of the Savanna Region of Ghana between February and December 2024.

Materials and Methods

- Ninety-eight (98) women responsible for preparing meals for the households were recruited based on consent and willingness to participate.
- Pictogram-based questionnaires (Fig. 1) were administered to the respondents following FAO (2010) procedures to identify the diverse food groups consumed by more than 50% of the households daily for two continuous weeks at different parts of the year.
- The household dietary diversity scores (HDDS) and household food consumption scores (HFCS) were computed and analysed in Stata statistical software, and the mean scores were reported.

Foods	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
CEREALS AND GRAINS/UNPROCESSED Maize, Rice, Millet, Sorghum, Others (specify)							
CEREALS AND GRAINS/PROCESSED Kenkey, Boiled rice, Spaghetti, Bread, TZ/foodstuffs, Others (specify)							
ROOTS AND TUBERS/UNPROCESSED Yam, Cassava, Sweet potato, Others (specify)							
MILK AND MILK/DAIRY PRODUCTS Fresh milk, Wapashi, Brokka, Yoghurts, Others (specify)							
MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS beef/chevon/mutton, chicken, Others (Liver, lungs, intestines, stomach), Others (specify)							
FISH AND FISH PRODUCTS (SEAFOOD) Fresh fish (Tilapia, salmon, etc), Smoked fish (Tilapia, salmon, etc), Fried fish (Tilapia, salmon, etc), Smoked fish, Others (specify)							
EGG AND EGG PRODUCTS Eggs, Boiled eggs, Fried eggs, Others (specify)							
VEGETABLES/VEGETABLES Aldia, Roselle (bwa), Others, Baobab leaves, Others (specify)							
FRUITS Palm fruit, Mango, Banana, Orange, Cashew, Shea fruits, African ebony (Coya), Baobab fruit, African black plum, Locust bean fruit, Others (specify)							

Fig. 1 Extracts of the pictogram-based questionnaires used during HDDS and HFCS study.

Results & Discussion

- Staple (maize), leafy vegetables (baobab leaves, and roselle leaves), milk, sugar, and oil dominated (5 times weekly to at least once daily) the food consumption patterns of the herder households,.
- The HDDS and HFCS varied considerably across the communities and the measurement period, with Busunu and Tailorpe performing better as they engaged more in livestock, poultry and crop production than the others.

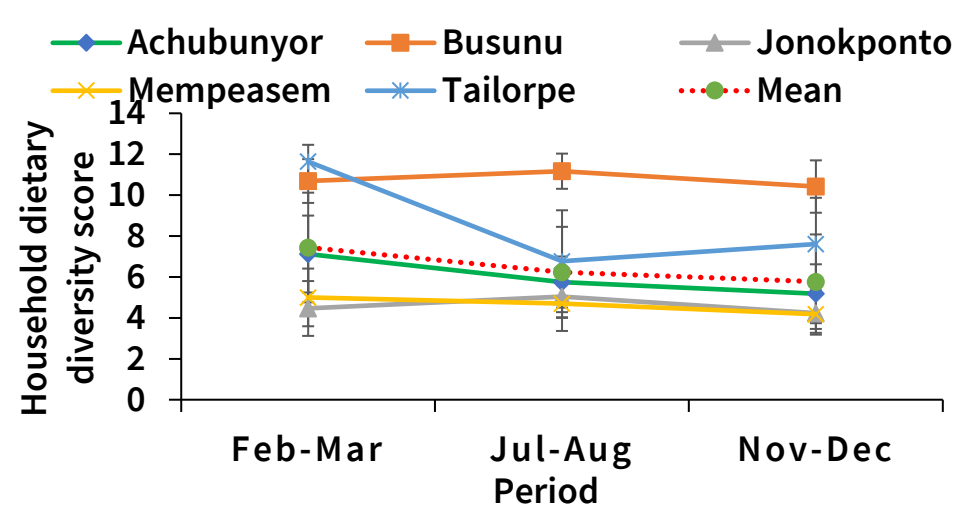


Fig. 2 Household dietary diversity scores of Fulani households in West Gonja, Ghana. A score of 6+ = good dietary diversity; 4.5 – 6 = medium dietary diversity; <4.5 = low dietary diversity

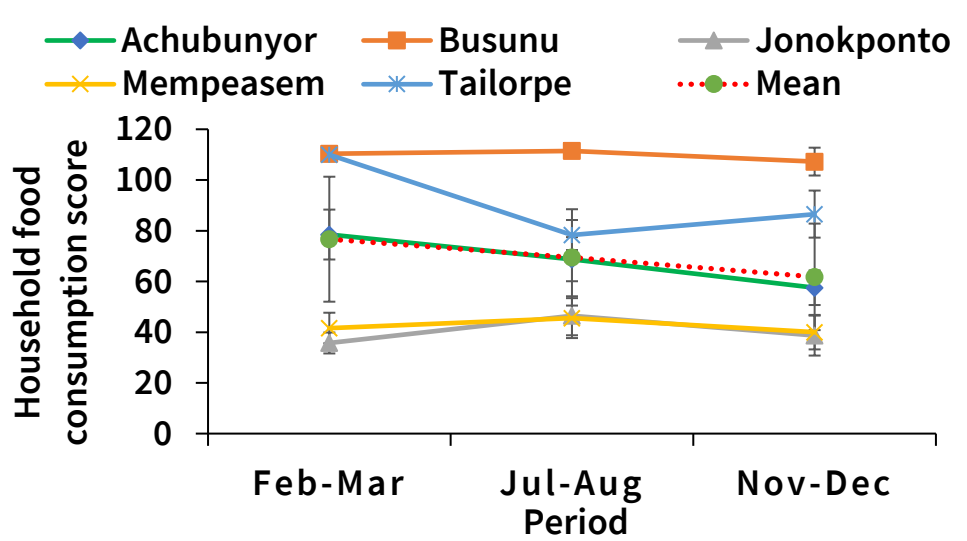


Fig. 3 Food consumption scores of Fulani households in West Gonja, Ghana. A score of >35 = acceptable, 21.5-35 = borderline, and 0-21 = poor.

Conclusion

- The HDD and HFC scores showed a positive sign of food security among the herder households.
- However, more efforts are required to sustain or improve the HDDS and HFCS, especially for herder households in Jonokponto and Mempeasem.

Reference: FAO (2010). *Guidelines for measuring household and individual dietary diversity*. Rome.



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