

**Rural Livelihood and Food Consumption Patterns Among
Households in Oyo State, Nigeria: Implications for Food
Security and Poverty Eradication in a Deregulated Economy**

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ABSTRACT Food security is a fundamental objective of development policy and also a measure of its success. Achieving food security is still a major problem for households in most rural areas of Nigeria; therefore the associated symptoms of food crisis are found throughout the country, though with differences based on occupation, agro-ecological, socio-economic factors and rural versus urban location. This paper analyses the livelihood and food consumption patterns among households in rural Oyo State, Nigeria. Analysis of data on a sample survey of rural households in three adjoining local government areas of Oyo State show that a household member consumes N3,465.13 worth of carbohydrate foods; N750.54 of proteins and N191.43 of vitamins. On the average, a household member consumes N1469 worth of food per month; though with the modal amount skewed towards the civil servants and artisans. Results of the analysis further show that there are short falls of 18% and 11% in carbohydrate and protein intake respectively in three years. The general livelihood patterns indicate that farmers who produce more of food consumed in the study area have the least disposable income to cater for life's basic needs. The results of the study have implications for food security and poverty eradication, especially in a deregulated economy. Therefore, promoting agricultural policies with appropriate price incentives that focus on intensification; diversification and resource-stabilizing innovations will create more wealth for all categories of rural households. In all, more rural financial and agricultural extension services are needed; these will improve the conditions needed for increased productivity and capital accumulation.