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Fig.1. PMH Push Factors

Approximately 89% of the 291 farmers surveyed reported harvesting their maize prematurely to prevent theft, according to a study conducted by CARD in the first week of April 2025 (Fig. 1)

All surveyed farmers cultivated maize during the 2024-2025 agricultural season, while only a few of them diversified to legumes like pigeon peas (36%), g/nuts (29%), soybeans (19%), and beans (16%) (Fig 2). Besides, surveyed farmers reported experiencing theft (38%), pest attack (33%), and extended dry spells (27%) (Fig 3).

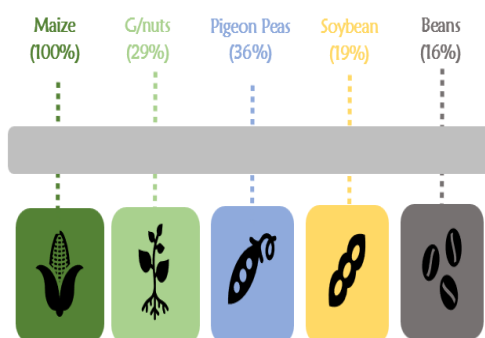


Fig.2. Crops cultivated in 2024-25

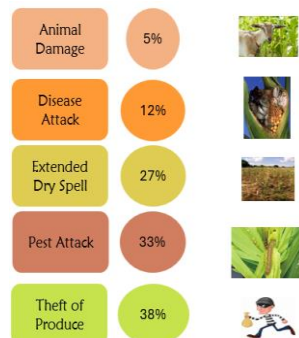


Fig.3. Experiences of Theft, Pests, dry spell, and others

Understanding how premature maize harvest (PMH) helps how farmers can plan for **effective post-harvest management interventions** to tackle PMH implications (Fig 4 – 5). Farmers are aware of the implications of PMH on quality issues, including **reduced yield** (Fig 5-6). About 84% of surveyed farmers are selling maize between **500 and 800 kwacha per kg of maize**, which is less than the **minimum farmgate price of 1050 kwacha per kg**.



Fig.4. PMH Implications

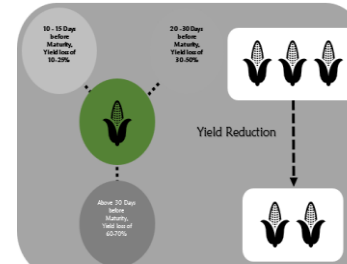


Fig. 5. PMH Yield Loss Impact

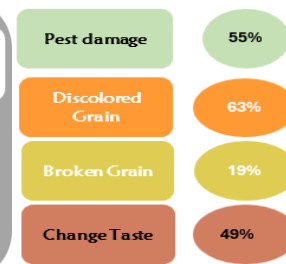


Fig.6. PMH Quality Effects

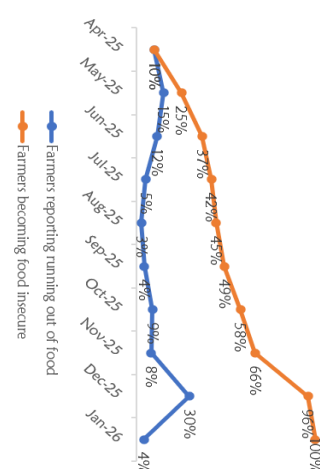


Fig.7. Food Security Implications

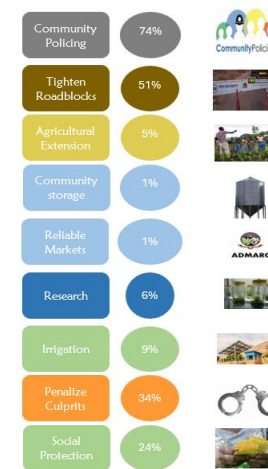


Fig.8. Prioritized Recommendations

Strengthening security during maize maturity and harvest period (March to June) will be critical where local leadership should enhance community bylaws and **Malawi Police Service should tighten roadblocks to curb illegal trade of maize** (Fig.8). Enforcement of minimum farmgate prices will also be pivotal to hedge farmers from exploitation. Besides, **social safety nets and winter cropping** will be key to cushion farmers from anticipated food shortages (Fig 7).