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INSTITUTIONALLY PRODUCED YIELD GAPS: DIAGNOSING FOOD SYSTEM GOVERNANCE FAILURES IN NIGERIA'S CASSAVA SECTOR USING THE SRSG FRAMEWORK

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This paper examines why cassava yields in Nigeria remain far below their potential despite widespread promotion of improved farming practices. Rather than attributing yield gaps solely to farmers' behaviour, the study focuses on how food system governance arrangements shape what farmers can do in practice. Using evidence from two cassava-producing communities, the paper shows how factors such as insecure land tenure, limited extension support, unequal decision-making authority within households and communities, and inflexible agricultural programmes constrain farmers' choices. Many practices often described as "suboptimal" are shown to be practical responses to these institutional conditions rather than rejections of expert advice. By analysing these dynamics through a governance lens, the paper highlights how misaligned responsibilities, authority, and resources within the food system produce yield gaps. The findings underscore the importance of designing food and agricultural

policies that better reflect local realities and support farmers' adaptive decision-making.

Palavras-chave: food system governance; institutional analysis; cassava production; yield gaps; srsg framework.