

# Title: Food Safety from Farm-to-Table: A Qualitative Study to Co-Create Lassa Fever Control Strategies in Ondo State, July 2024



## Authors:

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## Background

**Ingestion of contaminated foods** has been identified as an infection route for Lassa Fever (LF). Food processing and storage practices such as food drying on the ground and long storage time in warehouses increase the risk of food contamination and infection in people who consume these foods. Breaking this disease transmission pathway is critical for reducing the prevalence of LF. This study was conducted to optimize LF control by co-creating solutions for challenges identified by affected communities.

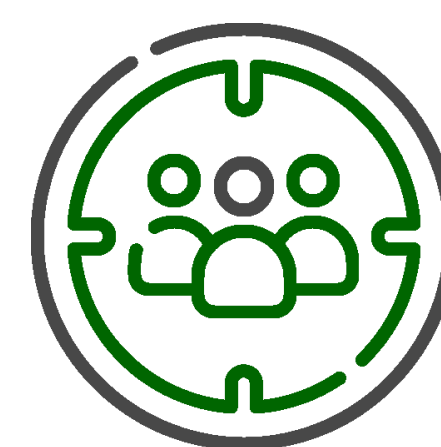


Open display of cassava near the roadside

## Methods



**8** Key Informants

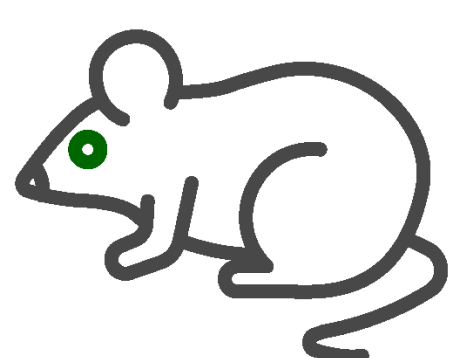


**6** Focus Group Discussions

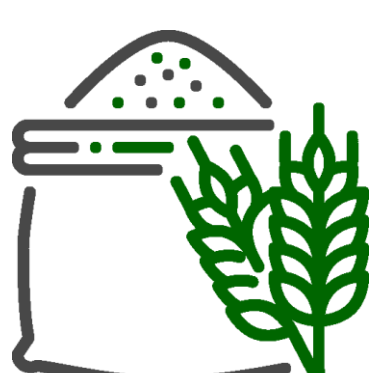
A qualitative study in two high-burden Local Government Areas of Akure-South and Owo, Ondo State, included **8 key informant interviews** and **6 focus group discussions** with traders, religious leaders, politicians, youth groups, LF survivors, artisans, and healthcare workers. Data was collected via voice recorder and analyzed manually through transcription, coding, and theme development. All data was archived on a secure, access-restricted organizational drive

## Results

### Food safety gaps (“farm-to-table”) promote LF transmission



Rats in farms identified as the first contamination point.



Grain contamination by rats reported; vendors sometimes repack to hide infestation.

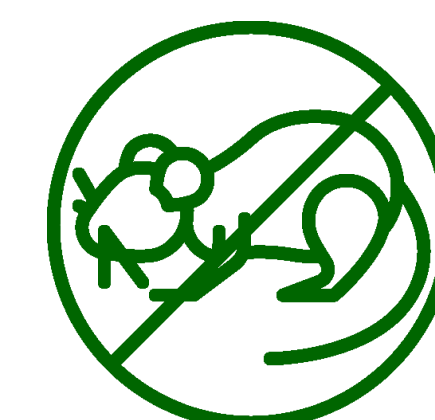


Poor hygiene and waste management in markets and homes encourage rat infestation and food contamination.

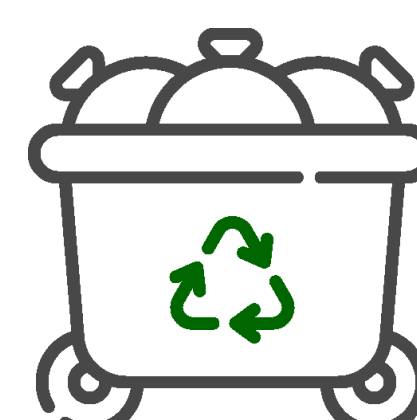
### Solutions proffered included



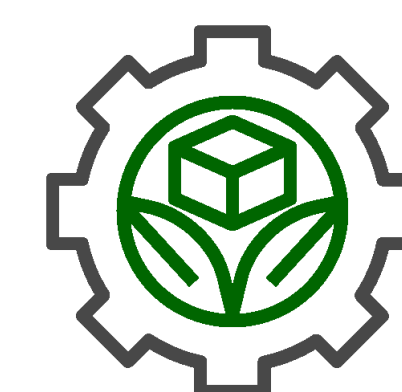
Improve Personal hygiene



Use rat-proof processing and storage tools



Invest in waste management infrastructure



Monitor food production



Conduct sustained health education campaigns

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Food safety is crucial in halting LF transmission. Understanding food processing and storage practices while leveraging existing community structures is a strategic combination that can significantly reduce food contamination. This can further be harnessed with a whole-of-society approach and governmental support.



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