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Determinants of Adoption and Diffusion of Fish Ponds in Cameroon

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Abstract

In face of a growing world population and declining fish stocks through overfishing, aquaculture can play a key role through the provision of high value protein affordable to poor people in developing countries. Yet, the full potential of fish farming is far from being realised in most African countries and the Cameroonian Government continues to import large quantities of fish to satisfy demand. The purpose of this study is to identify perceived driving forces that lead to adoption of fish farming in earthen ponds in Cameroon and inhibiting forces that hamper their sustainability and spread. The underlying theory is Kurt LEWIN'S (1951) psychological field theory in which behaviour is defined as a function of the interaction of the individual and his/her perceived environment. Everet ROGERS' (2003) 'variables determining the rate of adoption' are used as a specific framework. Semi-directive interviews with fish farmers for qualitative and quantitative data collection are used. General patterns of decision-making processes and important driving and inhibiting forces are determined and verified through group discussions. Interviews with local experts give initial thematic and logistic direction and help to critically reflect preliminary results. The expected outcome is the comprehensive understanding of fish farmers' perceptions and the factor combinations that influence their decision-making, based on the model of behaviour modification. This will be achieved through the analysis of fish farming as an innovation taking into account its farmer-perceived attributes and other variables. In particular, its relative advantage will be considered by the comparison of gross margins of alternative income generating activities based on representative farmer cases. The results will be discussed in view of recommendations for future promotion strategies and the role of spatial considerations in designing such strategies.

LEWIN, K. 1951: Field theory in social science. New York.

ROGERS E. 2003: The Diffusion of Innovations. Fifth Edition. The Free Press, New York.

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