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A Comparative Analysis of Land Use Systems in Benin

JEAN ADANGUIDI

Faculty of Economics and Management, University of Abomey-calavi, Benin, Economics, Benin

Abstract

Last year, a small farmer survey was carried out in Benin for deep understanding of the land use system in twelve villages. These villages were chosen in different districts according to specific criteria (Banikoara, Bassila, Dangbo, Djougou, Kétou, Klouékanmè, Matréri, Nikki, Ouessè, Parakou, Toffo, Zagnanado). A questionnaire was administered to twenty farmers in each village. Different data related to land use system were collected: composition of land, land prices, land use changes, cropping system, labour force, income and food security strategies. The aim of this paper is to give a global view of the land use systems in the study area. More specifically, we will discuss in a comparative basis:

- The composition of land use and land price in each region;
- The yield of the major food crops and its development during the last years;
- The relationship between the yield and other variables such as fallow period.
- The yield development after fallow period;
- The farmer's food production strategy ;
- The importance of price in farmer's production strategy.

The data were processed by the means of descriptive statistical tools mainly.

The results show that:

- The role of fallow period in the yield development varies from region to region and inside the same region from crop to crop.

- Prices (buying or selling price) play a major role in the farmer's production strategy. However, the farmer's decision to produce specific food crops depends on its role in the household food supply strategy.

- The study shows that cotton production decreased in many regions because of many problems related to the marketing system.

Keywords: Fallow, food crops, land use, yield