



Tropentag, October 9-11, 2007, Witzenhausen

“Utilisation of diversity in land use systems:
Sustainable and organic approaches to meet human needs”

Socio-Economic Impact of Upland Rice Production on Rural Livelihoods — The Case of Three Nigerian States

HEIKO ZELLER¹, MATTHIAS VON OPPEN²

¹*University of Applied Science Eberswalde, Landscape Management and Nature Conservation, Germany*

²*Gut Kröchlendorff, Germany*

Abstract

Rice has traditionally been an important and basic food commodity for certain populations in West Africa. In Nigeria, of all staple crops rice has grown in importance as a component of Nigerian diets. Since the mid-80s Nigerian consumption has increased tremendously at almost 11 % per annum, which is a greater increase than in any other West African country. The recent growth in rice demand is creating opportunities for small scale producers. Upland rice is largely produced by subsistence-oriented resource poor farm households. The use of external inputs such as mineral fertiliser is not common. As the crop is subject to climatic conditions the results are more uncertain than those of irrigated rice.

The relevance of upland rice production for households is outlined by using rural livelihood analysis tools. The framework places emphasis on the assets and gives a review of what people have or have access to. Resource endowments, income portfolios and corresponding livelihood typologies are identified to show the relevance of rice in view of specialisation or diversification strategies. The analysis refers to three regions which are situated in the south-west, middle belt and south east of Nigeria.

Results indicate that the resource endowment and diversification level vary along a south east gradient. Rice producing households are primarily smallholders with limited assets. The acreages of upland rice are around 1–1.3 ha which make up 25 % up to 49 % of the cultivated farmlands in the key sites. The specialisation level in view of livelihood typologies is low and only worth mentioning in the middle belt key site. Upland rice is, first and foremost, a cash-crop and accounts for approximately one-third of the cash income in each state. Consequently, rice cultivation is of particular importance for the income portfolio. With increasing diversification and in view of off-farm business, cash incomes are higher. This might implicate that better-off households have the ability to utilise farm or particularly non-farm sources of cash income to purchase inputs like mineral fertiliser and improved varieties.

Keywords: Income portfolio, rural livelihood analysis, upland rice production