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Impact of Import Restriction on Rice Production in Nigeria

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Abstract

Food security through adequate supply and the concurrent protection of the domestic production in Nigeria especially for a staple food like rice is a major issue. In the mid 80's a total ban on rice importation was introduced which was later lifted, since then there have also been irregular stints of similar trade (import) policies. How does the import restriction affect domestic rice production? What factors play important roles in domestic rice production given such import policies? The purpose of this study is to identify and make valid contributions towards a better understanding of the age long problem of rice self-sufficiency in the context of trade policies of Nigeria. The study employs a robust multiple regression for time series (1980–2015) dataset of the variables; domestic rice production, government expenditure in agriculture, government capital expenditure in agriculture, average foreign rice producers' prices, domestic producers' prices, the labour force and import restriction dummy variable. The findings show that rice production was much higher in years of import restriction compared to the other years with a difference of over 900,000 metric tonnes; there is a positive and significant relationship between the producer prices (foreign & domestic) against the domestic rice production, while the government expenditures in agriculture and the labour force showed no perceptible effect. Policy suggestions are that the import restriction cannot be dismissed as a veritable tool for improving domestic rice production; and so adequate funding of the rice industry/sector and provision of financial facilities to improve the type of technologies & inputs adopted by farmers in the production processes must be encouraged as well as similar investment from the private sector.

Keywords: Impact, import policy, Nigeria, production, restriction, rice