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“Global food security and food safety:
The role of universities”

Assessing Food Security Levels of Cocoa Farming Households in Assin North Municipality, Ghana

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Abstract

Promoting food security research with particular interest on the marginalised in society has become very relevant, more especially due to the promulgation of the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations. The contribution of cocoa sector to Ghana's economy and livelihoods of millions of the citizenry cannot be over emphasised. The study sought to assess gender and youth differences in food security level of cocoa farming households in Assin North Municipal in the Central Region of Ghana. The study employed cross-sectional research design using structured interview schedule to collect data from 129 cocoa farmers. The prevalence of food security was measured using the consolidated approach to reporting indicators of food security. Comparative analysis between male and female, and the youth and older farming households was conducted using t-tests. The result revealed that cocoa production in the area is male dominated and the youth tend to be less prominent in the enterprise. The food consumption score domain of the CARI Console reveals most households have acceptable level of food security (96.1 %) however, majority were using stress, crisis or emergency livelihood coping strategies. On the whole, about 4 out of every 5 households were either food secure or moderately food secure and only 20.2 percent of the household were either moderately or severely food insecure. There was no statistically significant difference male and female households. A similar result was also found between the youth and the older respondents. The study also showed that most of the respondents were able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical food insecurity coping strategies such as searching for wild foods, spending savings, withdrawing children from school and borrowing money to avert food shortage. It is therefore recommended that Cocoa Health Extension Programme should encourage and incentivize the youth and women to venture into cocoa farming to improve their food security.

Keywords: CARI Console, Cocoa, Farming households, Livelihood outcome, women in agriculture