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Examining the Impact of Linking School Feeding Program on Smallholder Farmer Income and Household Food Security Status

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Abstract

The study determines the food security status of smallholder farmers and analyses the factors influencing food security status in northeastern Nigeria. The school feeding programs have been identified as highly effective in reducing childhood hunger and malnutrition while also increasing local food production. This vehicle stimulates local economies by providing a market and source of income for local smallholder farmers by buying food from local suppliers. A purposeful selection of three states, namely Adamawa, Bauchi, and Gombe, was made for the study, and twelve local government areas, four from each state, and sixty wards with four farmers each were randomly selected to form 240 smallholder farmers. Data collected for the study include the farmers' socioeconomic characteristics, institutional factors affecting their productivity, and their seven-day food consumption recall. To determine factors influencing smallholder farmer food security status, descriptive analysis, as well as a binary probit regression, was used. The farmers' food consumption score revealed that 2.5% of the respondents were in the poor, 67.1% in the borderline, and 30.4% acceptable category. The results of the regression show that access to extension services, market information, and an increase in income positively affect farmers' food security ($p < 0.1$, 0.1, and 0.5, respectively), whereas an increase in age and a poor source of household diversification negatively affects it ($p < 0.5$). Based on our findings, emphasis should be placed on improved extension services, market information, concern for elderly farmers, low-income households, and farmers encouraged to diversify their sources of income in order to improve the food security of the farming households.

Keywords: Food security, school feeding Nigeria, smallholder farmers