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Farmers’ and academia’s views”

## Farmers’ strategies for dealing with flood risks in Bangladesh

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### Abstract

Flood is an unavoidable phenomenon in many parts of Bangladesh due to the tropical-monsoon climate and the physical characteristics of a low-lying riverine delta. Farmers in flood-affected localities adopt different farm management measures to minimise the consequences of flooding. In-depth information of farming strategies practised by different group of farmers in different localities is crucial to ensure the effective design and implementation of weather forecast information. Some studies on farmers’ flood coping and adaptation strategies, using survey methods covering a large number of farm households have highlighted the diversity in adaptation. However, less is known about the more detailed farming methods of farmers in response to floods. Using a qualitative approach, this study investigates existing farm management strategies in three flood-prone communities to mitigate against the negative impact of floods. The research was carried out in three villages of Islampur sub-district, of Jamalpur district, a flood-prone area with diverse farming practices. Data were collected through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with selected farmers, and observing different stages of farming activities.

The results highlight the ways in which farmers from these three communities use diverse farm-management practices to deal with flood risks. The three main strategies farmers employ are the use of different elevation levels of farm land, adjusting the timing and combinations of crops across the year and making field-specific crop and crop-variety choices. Farmers’ decisions about which crops and crop varieties to plant are largely informed by three criteria: growth duration, flood resistance and the value of the crop. Moreover, the findings also show that farmers’ decisions in one growing season have implications for the next growing season and thus also have a temporal dimension. This knock-on effect between the seasons implies that farmers’ response to floods in one year already anticipates the flood risks of the following year.

**Keywords:** Farm management strategies, farming practices, flood, growing season