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Farmers’ and academia’s views”

Farmland abandonment and its drivers on the urban-rural fringes of Ghana

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Abstract

Farmland has suffered significant losses in many emerging countries because of rapid urbanisation, industrialisation, and economic expansion. Farmers are also diversifying their livelihood and becoming less reliant on farming and hence resulting in farmland abandonment. Agriculture is a key source of employment for close to 60 % of Ghana’s population. As a result, depriving the sector of land in any section of the country causes an increase in unemployment and its eventual food crisis. This phenomenon would result in the possibility of food insecurity, and a low level of living standard due to farmers’ low income. Hence this study investigates the determinants of abandonment of farmland in the rapidly urbanizing metropolis of Shai-Osudoku District in Ghana. About 142 semi-structured questionnaires were administered to farm household heads in five communities in the Shai-Osudoku District. Multiple linear regression was used to examine the effect of household, institution, farm, and location characteristics on farmland abandonment. The results revealed five key factors that had influence on farmland abandonment: off-farm income (0.018) $p < 0.05$, access to labour (0.040) $p < 0.05$, farmland size (0.003) $p < 0.01$, land disputes (0.063) $p < 0.10$, and distance from the farmhouse to the nearest urban area (0.038) $p < 0.05$. Based on the findings, the study recommended that Ghana implement an urban development policy to mitigate the harmful consequences of land-use changes on urban ecosystems in the Shai-Osudoku District and throughout Ghana. The purpose of such policies should be to maintain a reasonable balance between urban infrastructure growth, ecological sustainability, and agricultural productivity.

Keywords: Farmland abandonment, land tenure, land-use change, questionnaire survey, urban agriculture