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Assessment of diversification strategies on level of living among soybean farmers in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

On-farm diversification refers to the shift from primary agricultural produce to diversifying economic outputs within the agricultural sector. Increasing the productivity of the agricultural sector has significant multiplier effects in stimulating other sectors of the rural economy. The study was designed to assess the effect of on-farm diversification strategies on output and level of living among soybean-based cropping farmers in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Primary data was collected from 336 soybean-based cropping farmers with the aid of a structured questionnaire. The livelihood diversification index and ANOVA statistics were used to achieve the study's objectives. The result of the distribution of the soya bean farmers showed that, about (80.5%) male were involved in soya bean based cropping system. This could be attributed to the fact that men are mostly involved in crop production in the study area as women are mostly play a supportive roles such as taking part in planting and harvesting and post-harvest handling of harvested crops. Soybean crop farmers engaged in soybean/maize- (36.7%), soybean/cowpea- (25.2%), soybean/sorghum- (24.6%) based and sole soybean (13.5%) cropping systems. Results show that majority of the rural households (69.6%) diversified their livelihoods into several activities and earned significant amount of income from multiple sources. Only 30.5% of households had less than 0.01 on the Simpson index, thus depending on only one source of livelihood activity. On-farm income was the highest income sources contributing 73.4% of the total mean share of the income of the farmers with a significant difference ($p < 0.001$, $\chi^2 = 31.98$) between the on-farm, off-farm and non-farm earnings. This implied that on-farm income had significant impact on the level of living among soybean based cropping systems in Nigeria. Government policy needs to focus on access to arable land and extension support targeted at rural households to promote diversification to on-farm activities. Since the production of soybean and its diversification is skewed towards male folk, Paying attention to the creation of gender-sensitive opportunities and removal of gender bias and discrimination within communities, to allow female households to diversify their income.

Keywords: Income, livelihood diversification, Nigeria, soybean