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Assessment on the challenges facing onion production in foni berefet, west coast region in the Gambia

Basiru Bojang

National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), Cropping System and Agroforestry Research Directorate (CS&AD), Gambia

Abstract

This study examines the challenges facing onion production in Foni Berefet, West Coast Region of The Gambia. The primary objective is to identify socio-economic factors, production practices, and major constraints experienced by onion farmers. A total of 30 farmers participated in the survey, with data collected on socio-demographic profiles, farming techniques, water sources, irrigation methods, soil types, common disease symptoms, and management practices. The results reveal that onion cultivation is predominantly undertaken by middle-aged, married individuals, most of whom have limited formal education and rely on farming as their main source of livelihood. Sandy loamy soil is the most widely used soil type, while boreholes serve as the primary water source for irrigation. The study notes a frequent occurrence of rot symptoms, although the majority of farmers reported minimal crop losses. However, disease control remains a significant challenge, with poor crop management, insufficient sanitation, and inadequate knowledge identified as critical obstacles. Other constraints include limited financial resources, pest infestations, pest resistance, and a lack of technical support. These issues collectively hinder productivity and reduce farmers' income. The findings suggest that improving crop management, strengthening sanitation, introducing disease-resistant varieties, and increasing access to financial and technical assistance could markedly improve onion production in the region. The study recommends targeted policy interventions and farmer training programmes to address these challenges and promote sustainable onion farming in Foni Berefet. Overall, the research underscores the importance of collaborative efforts among government agencies, agricultural extension workers, and local communities to enhance onion production, improve livelihoods, and contribute to long-term food security in the region.

Keywords: Agriculture challenges, Irrigation systems , onion production, pest and disease management, Soil fertility, Water management

Contact Address: Basiru Bojang, National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), Cropping System and Agroforestry Research Directorate (CS&AD), Brikama, 220 Banjul, Gambia, e-mail: basirubojang11@gmail.com