



Strengthening the Support to Vegetable Growers of Santo Nino, Cagayan, Philippines to Boost Production



S&T in Agriculture

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Key Findings and Policy Implications

- Majority of farmers belong to the male representation, middle-aged group adults (41-60) with a mean age of 51.32 suggesting mature demographics are experienced vegetable growers. The regulatory bodies of the government may design an intervention to help the aging farmers.
- Most farmers (60%) grow crops year-round, using intensive farming methods to boost productivity. However, 92% farm less than 1 hectare, with an average of just 0.51 hectares. This small land size limits production scale but shows efficient land use.
- The government can support small-scale farmers by providing access to high-yield technologies, training on sustainable intensive farming, and linking them to markets to maximize their limited land.
- The community of vegetable growers relies on local resources and traditional methods, with good access to seeds and fertilizers but limited use of modern practices, training, and technology. The government may implement a support program offering training, modern tools, and access to digital technologies through partnerships with agricultural experts.

Background

Santo Niño, Cagayan has strong agricultural potential, with vegetable farming serving as a key source of income, food security, and employment for many rural households. However, the productivity of local growers remains low due to limited access to quality seeds, fertilizers, modern equipment, and basic infrastructure like irrigation and post-harvest facilities. Farmers also struggle with weak technical support, lack of financing, and limited knowledge of sustainable, climate-resilient practices.

Despite existing government programs, many vegetable growers still face challenges in accessing effective and targeted support. To improve productivity and resilience, there is a need for stronger interventions, including enhanced extension services, better infrastructure, access to credit, and capacity-building efforts. These actions will help empower farmers to adopt modern techniques, reduce losses, and increase their overall income and sustainability.

Research Objectives

To assess and strengthen the existing support systems for vegetable growers in Santo Niño, Cagayan to enhance agricultural productivity and promote sustainable vegetable production.

Specifically, it aimed to:

- Determine the socio-demographic status of vegetable grower respondents.
- Determine the socio-economic characteristics and other economic activities related to agriculture.
- Evaluate the agricultural activities and services received.
- Identify the Marketing, Sources of financing for vegetable production, savings, investments and problems encountered.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive research design to examine the profile of vegetable growers in Sto. Niño, Cagayan. Fifty (50) community residents were randomly selected from the list of registered vegetable growers in the area.

Data were gathered through a validated questionnaire, which covered agricultural practices, economic activities, services received, marketing, financing, savings, and challenges. Face-to-face interviews were also conducted to support the responses. Prior to data collection, permission was secured from local officials. The researchers personally administered the questionnaires to ensure full retrieval. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and ranking to interpret socio-demographic profiles and identify common problems.

Key Findings

Farmer Demographics

The majority of vegetable growers are middle-aged, married males, predominantly Ilocano, and members of farmer organizations. Most have completed high school or college, indicating moderate educational attainment that could support further training and skills development.

Farming Practices and Resources

Most farmers operate on small plots (less than 1 hectare) and practice year-round cultivation. They rely heavily on local resources and traditional tools, with limited use of mechanized equipment or modern techniques. Hybrid seed varieties are commonly used, but access to irrigation remains limited and mostly private.

Access to Support Services

While 90% of farmers received seeds and fertilizers from government sources, only 52% had attended training, and even fewer accessed services like irrigation support (4%) or technology demonstrations (6%). Awareness of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) was moderate (60%), but only a third actually practiced them.

Production and Marketing Challenges

Farmers face major issues such as flood and typhoon damage, pest infestation, and high dependency on synthetic inputs. Most sell through middlemen (66%) who control pricing, limiting farmers' earnings and market power. Only 26% transport their products directly, and pricing is often dictated by buyers.

Financial and Risk Management

While 74% reported having sufficient capital, nearly half rely solely on personal savings. Very few access crop insurance (26%) or government financial aid. Environmental risks significantly impact yield, with 54% reporting reduced harvests and 46% reporting total crop loss during severe events.

Conclusion

The socio-demographic profile of vegetable grower respondents reveals a predominantly male, middle aged, married population with a strong cultural identity and significant organizational involvement. The socio-economic characteristics of the vegetable grower respondents reveal a dedicated and primarily self-sufficient agricultural community. Result also reveals that a community of vegetable growers that relies heavily on local resources and traditional practices. The community of vegetable growers who face significant challenges in marketing, production costs, and environmental risks. While there is a sense of capital sufficiency among many respondents, the reliance on intermediaries for sales 2024 and the vulnerability to climate-related damage are concerning.

Policy Recommendations

The findings suggest a need for improved market access, better pricing strategies, and enhanced support for risk management to bolster the sustainability and profitability of vegetable production in this community. Addressing these issues could lead to more resilient agricultural practices and improved economic outcomes for the growers.

Target Policy Actors and Beneficiaries



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Editor's Note

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