Farmers’ preferences for varietal trait improvements: The case of rice farmers in Nueva Ecija, Philippines

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Introduction

- Farmers have their own preferences for technology attributes, but these are not always known nor do they always match with the objectives of the researchers.
- Existing methods on preference elicitation are limited in number of ways: preferences are elicited from the traits per se, do not consider resource constraint and risks faced by the researchers, and prone to hypothetical bias.

Objective

- We use an experimental methodology based on investment games to examine rice farmers’ preferences for varietal trait improvements (VTIs).

Data and Methodology

**Experimental design**

- The Investment Game Application (IGA) (Demont et al., 2015) was used to elicit farmers’ preferences for VTIs.

- Farmers decide on a replacement variety they want to be improved, then decide on the traits to be improved and how much. They decide on these under a resource constraint and with the risks involved in breeding.
- Farmers are given an endowment fund of PHP100 and use it to invest in the VTIs they prefer.

**Experimental procedure**

- Each experimental session was randomly assigned an information treatment: (i) market information; (ii) climate change; (iii) market + climate change; (iv) control.

A total of 12 sessions (one in each village selected) were conducted in February 2016. Overall, 122 rice producing households participated in the experiment, with both husband and wife as participants.

Results

- Loss reducing traits are the priorities during the wet season.
- Investment shares of grain quality traits increased in the dry season, but most investments are still in the loss reducing traits.

Conclusions

- Results of the study provide important insights into the trait improvements that farmers prefer and the factors that influence these.
- The methodology has the potential to transform the way farmer preferences are elicited and prioritized.
- Limitation in terms of generalization of findings to a larger population since variety choice and adoption are location-specific.

Reference


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