

Factors Affecting Knowledge and Attitude of Farmers toward Relative Advantage of Crops in Garmsar County

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate factors affecting knowledge and attitude of farmers toward relative advantage of crops in Garmsar County. The study was performed by causal-relative method. The population of this research was 13825 farmers in Garmsar County, which 380 was estimated as sample size by Morgan Table. The main tool of the study was a questionnaire, which its validity was confirmed by a panel of faculty members and the reliability was obtained by pilot test. The result showed that most of farmers toward crop farming of advantage relative were lower-middle knowledge, but upper- middle attitude. Results of the logit analysis of factors affecting knowledge of farmers toward relative advantage of crops farming showed that level of literacy, number of attendance in extension classes, number of extension visits had positive impacts, but contact to extension agent had negative impact. Results of the logit analysis of factors affecting on attitude also showed that level of literacy, number of attendance in extension classes, number of extension visits and farming income in past year had positive impacts, but contact to extension agents and number of land plot holding farmer had negative impact.

Keywords: Relative Advantage; Knowledge; Attitude, Crops; Garmsar.

Extended Abstract

Objectives

Determining the relative advantage of agricultural products in different regions is one of the important aspects of agricultural policy making and planning that can be used to obtain a suitable pattern of production and cultivation in different regions according to the conditions in each region. This will not only make optimal use of the resources and facilities of each region, but also enable sustainable livelihoods and the pursuit of personal, collective, and ultimately economic profitability of producers. Considering the general climate and agricultural situation in the Semnan province, more attention should be paid to the efficient use of scarce resources in the production of crops. This requires recognition of the relative advantages existing in Semnan province and its counties including Garmsar. Identifying the comparative advantages of production in agriculture and using them have two uses: first, it will improve production resource allocation policies and production patterns, and second, it can specify the type of exports and their combinations. The purpose of this study was to determine the level and factors affecting farmers' knowledge and attitude to the relative advantage of agricultural products in Garmsar County.

Methods

The present work was an applied study in terms of objective and causal-relative method. The population of this research was 13825 farmers in Garmsar County, which 380 was estimated as sample size by Morgan Table. The main tool of the study was a questionnaire, which its validity

was confirmed by a panel of faculty members and the reliability was obtained by pilot test. The dependent variable was the knowledge and attitude of farmers toward relative advantage of Crops in Garmsar County. Also, the independent variables included the personal, economical, extension educational factors. Data were statistically analyzed and all calculations were done by SPSS software package. The ISDM method was used to describe the variables of knowledge and attitude toward comparative advantage crops. This method is one of the proposed methods in describing attitude and knowledge in which the obtained scores can be divided into four levels. The Logit model was used to study the level of knowledge and attitude of farmers regarding the relative advantage of crops in the region.

Findings

The results showed that 54.5% of the farmers had low knowledge and 26% had moderate advantage over cultivation of crops. Low knowledge of producers as one of the important causes them to not utilize production resources properly and consequently, with low awareness, produce uneconomic output. Low productivity and poor livelihoods would be the result of such conditions. On the other hand, the survey of farmers' attitude toward crops with Relative advantage shows that 43.5% had a good attitude and 16% had an excellent attitude in this regard. This situation indicates that farmers, despite their knowledge was low, but the tendency have to grow crops with the relative advantage. Macro-policies to develop crop Relative advantage, provide comprehensive needs and support, planning and implement extension programs can increase producers' knowledge and capabilities to cultivate relative advantage of Crops in Garmsar County. Results of the logit analysis of factors affecting knowledge of farmers toward relative advantage of crops farming showed that level of literacy, number of attendance in extension classes, number of extension visits had positive impacts, but contact to extension agent had negative impact. Results of the logit analysis of factors affecting on attitude also showed that level of literacy, number of attendance in extension classes, number of extension visits and farming income in past year had positive impacts, but contact to extension agents and number of land plot holding farmer had negative impact.