

Divergent Preferences for Rice Variety Attributes among Farmers and Breeders in Nepal

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Abstract : This paper presents a discrete choice experiment (DCE)-based analysis of farmers' preferences for rice variety attributes involving 540 farmers from the Terai region of Nepal clustered into East, Mid, and Western Terai regions. Findings reveal that farmers prioritize grain yield, finer grain types, drought tolerance, and shorter crop duration when selecting rice varieties, with subtle gender-based differences observed. However, breeding programs have predominantly emphasized grain yield and crop duration, possibly neglecting other vital traits. Furthermore, the research reveals a concerning decline in the yield trends of both released and registered rice varieties. Notably, the limited availability of recommended rainfed varieties, despite strong farmer preferences for drought tolerance, underscores the imperative of bridging this gap to ensure food security. This study provides insights into the multifaceted nature of farmer preferences and calls for a more holistic approach to varietal development that aligns with farmers' needs and the evolving challenges of rice farming in the Terai region of Nepal.

Keywords : breeders' preferences, discrete choice experiment, farmers' preferences, rice variety attributes

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