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The influence of price on rice production in Sierra Leone

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ABSTRACT

Rice is the main staple food of the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans, eaten on a daily basis by almost every household in the country. Rice is the most important food crop widely grown by farmers across the country. Although much attention is now focused on rice production through the small holder commercialization programme (SHCP), less attention has been given to investigating the constraints faced by rice producers in the country. Also, as food insecurity continues to be a major development problem across the country, thereby undermining people's health, productivity, and often their very survival; this study contributes to efforts to overcome the development challenges posed by food insecurity necessarily begin with accurate assessment of influential factors that constrained the production of the staple food, rice. The main objective of this study is therefore to analysis the factors that influence rice production in the country, and specifically examine the relationship between rice production and the price of rice as sold in the domestic market. The study used a log linear model with the quantity of rice produced as the dependent variable and the price of domestic rice, quantity of rice imported and price of imported rice as explanatory. Findings indicated that, domestic rice is more expensive than imported rice per ton, and this underscores the argument that, rice importation is undermining domestic rice production as a viable income generating activity. Also, almost all the people in the capital city which hosts about 70% of the total population of country prefer eating imported rice, since it is free from stones and other impurities. However, In order to control price and still increase rice production, the government should be able to purchase the rice from the farmers and then sell this rice to private retailers.

KEYWORDS

Sierra Leone; Food Security; Rice Production; Econometric Model Specification; Price of Domestic Rice

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