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CENTRAL RIVER REGION OF THE GAMBIA**

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THE IMPACT OF ACCESS TO INPUTS ON RICE YIELD OF FARMERS IN THE CENTRAL RIVER REGION OF THE GAMBIA

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ABSTRACT

This study on the impact of access to agricultural inputs on rice yield was conducted in the Central River Region of the Gambia. The objective is to determine the impact of inputs on rice yield and to suggest strategies to improve farmers' access to inputs. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered through a cross-sectional survey of 384 randomly sampled farmers cultivating rice in the tidal ecologies during the 2016 cropping season. Pearson correlation was used to check the relationship between each of the input accessed and certain socio-economic characteristics with rice yield. The results show that inputs such as chemical fertilizer, seeds and labour have a positive relationship with coefficient scores of 0.620, 0.402 and 0.378 at 5% significant level. On the other hand, with the exception of income which showed a strong association with yield (0.593), other socioeconomic characteristics such as age, household size and educational level of the farmers, all show very weak or negative relationships with coefficient scores of 0.105, -0.55 -0.113 respectively at 5% significant. These indicate that inputs have major impact on rice yield and therefore, it is recommended that farmers' access to agricultural inputs should be improved in order to increase rice yields. This can be done by developing the input sector, provision of input subsidy and giving affordable credit to farmers.



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