

Farmers' perceived effects of soil degradation on the yield of improved cassava varieties in south east Nigeria

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Improved cassava varieties have been developed and disseminated to farmers in the study area but the yield of cassava have been limited by poor farming practices which has led to soil degradation. This study therefore analyses the farmers' perceived effect of soil degradation on the yield of improved cassava varieties. 342 randomly selected farmers from three states that make up the south eastern zone were interviewed with a structured questionnaire. Data collected include; farming practices employed by the farmers, soil degradation experienced, perceived effect of soil degradation on yield of cassava. Also, the study hypothesized that the farming practices employed by farmers have no significant effect on soil degradation. The data obtained was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The result revealed that most of the farmers (96.2%) cleared and burnt their farmland before use, practiced complete tillage (88.3%) and makes use of pesticides (74.8%). The types of soil degradation observed by most of the farmers include; water erosion (88.8%), deforestation (83.3%), and wind erosion (83.2%). The grand mean of 2.55 as indicated by the Likert type scale shows that farmers perceived soil degradation affects the yields of cassava irrespective of the variety planted. The result of the probit multiple regression was significant at 5%, therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. The study recommends among others, that the Nigerian government with the help of the research institutes should concentrate more on ways to conserve the degraded soil of the south east than carrying out research on more improved varieties as the degraded soil is affecting the yield of the improved varieties.

Biography

Nwaiwu Juan Chinatu is a PhD holder and a Lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Extension and Rural Development at Imo State University Owerri, Nigeria. She is a Senior Lecturer and teaches courses in "Diffusion of innovation, rural and community development, entrepreneurship, communication in extension among others". She has been lecturing for more than 19 years with a research interest on "Arable crop farmers and soil degradation". She has attended so many conferences both locally and internationally and published more than 25 journals and has also attended so many training and workshop in the field of Agriculture.

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