

Is Organic Farming Worthwhile? Productivity and Profitability of Organic Rice Farming in Camarines Sur, Philippines

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Keywords

- organic rice farming
- productivity
- profitability

Abstract

The popularity of organic food consumption has attracted many Filipino farmers to organic production. In the province of Camarines Sur, organic rice dominates the organic food industry since it is produced and traded on a commercial scale. However, organic rice production only accounts for 1% of the total rice production in the province. Shifting from conventional to organic farming is still an issue for many rice farmers. The study was conducted to determine the level of productivity and profitability of organic rice farms in the province. The study surveyed the 60 certified organic rice farms active in the province. Results showed that 53% of the certified organic rice farms reported high to very high farm productivity (i.e., 54 to 88 cavans) while 27% generated high to very high farm profitability (>37% return on sales). The average yield of an organic rice farming is 53 cavans per hectare with an average net income of PhP 35,000 per cropping season. The average profit is way above the household poverty threshold at PhP 8,022 per month. Profitability does not entirely depend on the productivity of organic rice farms. It can also be attributed to its premium pricing. The farmers can look into ways of maximizing gains on sale price per unit through value addition and strict implementation of organic rice production protocol to minimize input costs. Despite the need to improve the industry's productivity and profitability, organic rice farming has the potential to reduce poverty in rural areas in the country.