



Nutritional Knowledge and Roles of Women Farmers in Resolving Hidden Hunger in Claveria, Misamis Oriental, Philippines

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Abstract: Hidden hunger or micronutrient malnutrition is becoming prevalent in farming households especially in the Philippines. Hence in a country where women in agriculture provides for the major micronutrients in the body, they have a highlighted role in this solution. This paper seeks to underline this role through a quantitative hidden hunger study involving 60 households of women vegetable and fruit producers in Claveria, Misamis Oriental. Findings showed that better educated women with older children have greater knowledge about micronutrients. Women who obtained knowledge from health workers had scored the highest level, whereas those who sourced knowledge from institutions like LGUs or school scored the lowest. Most of them decide singly or jointly with spouses on the choice of vegetables for production but have lesser influence on which fruits to grow. Women also predominantly control decisions regarding vegetable and fruit purchase and consumption. Vegetables consumed are largely sourced from own production containing Vitamins C, A and Manganese; whereas, fruits consumed are mainly purchased containing Vitamins C, A, Potassium and Calcium. Quantitative analysis revealed, that the higher the nutritional knowledge, the higher: (a) their budget allocation for vegetables, (b) the household fruit consumption in terms of kilograms, and (c) farm proportion for fruit production. Study reveals that because most of the women's households consumed the vegetables they produce, then it is important to pay attention to what they produce. In order to increase the availability of certain micronutrients, it is necessary to consider either the higher production and/or the increased consumption of these vegetables and fruits. Findings also indicate the necessity of increasing women's and men's level of nutritional knowledge from moderate to high because the former are sole decision-makers for food purchase and consumption, and the latter are dominant decision-makers of which vegetables and fruits to produce in the farm.

Key Words: hidden hunger; micronutrient deficiency; women in agriculture