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Farmer climate change adaptation in the West African Sudan Savannah: Reality check and feasible approaches

Daniel Callo-Concha
University of Bonn, Germany

Farming is the economic engine of West Africa. Regularly hampered by harsh ecological and institutional conditions, the situation has been worsened by climate change. The West African Science Service on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL) enhances scientific knowledge, available data and local capabilities to confront climate change. To these ends, local farmer adaptation appears key by their supposed livelihoods compatibility. This presentation details the perspective of the West African Sudan Savannah farmer, i.e., drivers of their climate change perception, coping measures they carry out, and the suitability of these measures. Furthermore, building upon this knowledge-baseline, the presentation details the outcomes of specific (disciplinary and interdisciplinary) research, gauging the contribution of these studies to the general resilience and adaptability of households. Finally, the operational means and supporting policy decisions to encourage them are explored. Findings highlight the complex character of adaptation, their lack of correlation to climate hazards and extreme events, and that their selection should underline several key factors. These include their short-term economic benefit, appropriateness regarding the local socio-ecological conditions and ongoing traditional practices; and operationally, the engagement with local agricultural extension institutions.

Biography

Daniel Callo-Concha is a senior scientist at the Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany. He is an agronomist with 15 years of experience in the interface of agriculture/natural resource management in Latin America and Africa. His latest research focuses on farmers' climate change adaptation in West Africa, contribution of traditional agro forestry systems to food and nutrition security, agricultural socioecological system resilience and adaptability and complex systems analysis.

d.callo-concha@uni-bonn.de

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