Identification and Analysis of Factors Affecting Agricultural Land Use Change in rural Area
(Case Study: Sari County)

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Extended Abstract

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems in agricultural field is land use change that has been growing recently and will disturb the balance of agricultural products in long term. This problem is more acute when it tends to occur in the areas that are agricultural hub such as Mazandaran province in Iran. Many cities in this province are experiencing this difficulty, especially in Sari as the center of this province. In recent decades, land use changes have become a serious issue in Sari which have led to considerable losses of the agricultural product. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out a research based on local conditions to identify stimulus and effective factors of farmer’s land use changes and to provide practical solutions. In this regard, the main objective of this study was to identify factors which affect the agricultural land use change in rural area of Sari County.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Land use is ”the arrangements, activities, and inputs that people undertake in a certain type of land cover to produce, change or maintain it”. When land users decide to use their land for various purposes, land use change occurs. There are many factors that affect farmers’ willingness to change the land use. Some studies have identified important variables dealing with land-use change including: growing population and urbanization development, creating new jobs, proximity to infrastructure such as roads and highways, tourism, improvement in life level, opportunities for social activities, low capital expenditure in agricultural field, lack of fertile lands, rising costs of agricultural activities, lack of knowledge about the effects of environmental degradation, product marketing, and so on. It is clear that in different societies, impact of these factors -in the process of Land-Use Change- can be different. Thus, this study will investigate the factors which affect the agricultural land use change in Sari County. Identifying these factors might help to make plans to prevent or organize the problem of agricultural land use changes.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research is an applied, descriptive-analytical research. To collect information, library study and field survey were used. The research population consists of 326 farmers who have changed a part of their agricultural land use. Using Krejcie and Morgan’s table, sample size was determined as 175. Samples were selected using stratified proportional sampling method. The research instrument was a questionnaire that its validity was verified by a panel of experts, and its reliability was obtained through Alpha Cronbach test (0.85). The factor analysis technique was used for analyzing the data through SPSS software.

4. DISCUSSION

The result of factor analysis specified nine elements as the most important factors affecting land use change including: insufficient supply of initial conditions for planting, socio-economic factors, geographical factors, risk management and lack of access to production inputs, psychological factors, immigration, governmental policy, and high production input prices. These nine factors had identified 66.47% of the variance of the factors which affect agricultural land use change. Based on our findings, the main element that encourages farmers to change their land use is insufficient supply of initial conditions for planting and the second place will be assigned to socio-economic
factor. Therefore, more attention should be paid to these factors, by planners and policymakers.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results, provision, implementation, and support of applied-economic plans such as land integration, permission, and establishment of processing- supplementary industries near the agricultural production fields, paying attention to agricultural insurance, and so on, to create a sustainable balance between the income of the agricultural field and other fields might noticeably reduce or abolish farmers’ motivation to change their land use.

**Keywords:** Land use change, agricultural land, Sari County.

**References:**


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