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ASSESSMENT OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC ON LOCAL FARMER'S PRODUCTIVITY IN SAN ISIDRO, JASAAN, MISAMIS ORIENTAL

By

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(A Student Collaborative Research)

Abstract

The assessment of the challenges and opportunities during the pandemic on local farmers under study was found to be helpless as they see different misfortune in today's environment. They consider this fight played by them without government intervention to aid the battle of crisis. They feel demotivated by their desire to explore beyond since the event gives them the hint of losing at the end. They also viewed it that will lower their productivity somehow creating turmoil that could affect society as a whole. It is also critical to local farmers if the control of entry on foreign products will only be an option by the government and there is a free flow of foreign goods. The economy and the society are considered a recipient of the effect suggesting that the government should revisit the structure of control over the entry of foreign products as one way of helping the local producer that suffers not only the concurrence of the pandemic but also how the governance in terms of its consistency on the implementation and control. It is further concluded that the only way to control these discomforts, is for the government should impose regulation, and abiding by the mandate is the only recourse. Although, they are positive that other good things might happen and eventually bring them to the pedestal due to the new governance, and hope to establish a policy that somehow gives them the freedom to perform more so that the pandemic is now on its downward trend.

Keywords: ***Assessment of challenges and opportunities during the pandemic on local farmer's productivity in San Isidro, Jasaan Misamis Oriental***

Introduction

Agriculture is extremely important in our civilization. Farmers are the main source of every Filipino's necessities, and they are our key heroes for today's means. This is the backbone of human society, supplying not just food and nutrition but also jobs for millions of people around the world. A farmer is someone who works in agriculture and raises animals for food or raw materials. People who Agriculture raise field crops, orchards, vineyards, poultry, or other livestock are commonly referred to as "farmers." A farmer may own the land he or she cultivates or work as a laborer on land owned by others, but in most industrialized countries, a farmer is often a farm owner, with farmhands as employees.

Farmers, by other definitions, were those who worked hard to encourage or develop the growth of plants, land, crops or raised animals. Every farmer's difficulties and potential are on the line in this pandemic. Given how much has changed and how our farmers are coping. Protocols are ubiquitous, and one of the main reasons why they are unable to export their crops and shrubs to other countries is because of them. The global pandemic has had a negative influence on several economic sectors. The government's quick response to the global pandemic resulted in numerous travel restrictions and brief market closure. Travel restrictions disrupted the supply chain, resulting in wasteful waste of goods and increased stock levels. Due to the government's certification of agriculture as essential and exemption from any travel movement, the agriculture sector endured only minor restrictions. The good news is that agriculture is accustomed to overcoming obstacles. Farmers are used to adapting to a variety of different obstacles when it comes to growing the crops that people rely on. These difficulties demonstrate that

more needs to be done to improve our food system's resilience. We spoke to farmers, growers, producers, and industry professionals around the world to explore how they are reacting in this unique period to better grasp these challenges. The growing demand for and appeal of locally farmed food has been widely reported in the media. Farmers selling local food could provide a useful product differentiation approach by satisfying consumer demand for regional characteristics. Farmers can receive a price premium and/or a larger proportion of the food dollar through direct sales, as well as entrepreneurial expertise and information to satisfy consumer preferences, at farmer's markets. All of this points to the possibility of using season extension technologies to increase farmers' direct market exposure in locations where seasonal markets predominate. As a result, governments should make it easier for labor and agricultural products to travel around. To strengthen the system's resilience, the susceptibility of pre-Covid-19 distribution chains should be evaluated, and a new food production chain should be built up. Small farmers and vulnerable persons should also be financially helped. Facilitators should adopt safety procedures to improve working conditions and maintain staff health and safety. The goal of this study is to assess the challenges and possibilities faced by local farmers in San Isidro, Jasaan Misamis Oriental, in the agriculture and food sector during the epidemic, as well as to summarize the recommendations needed to limit and control the pandemic's impact. The gap in this study is that farmers' issues before the pandemic strike were natural tragedies, and their revenue was far higher than it was during the pandemic. Most of them lost a lot of customers since purchasers bought their items at a lesser price and their crops/products rotted because they didn't sell them quickly enough when the rules were tightened. Farmers' difficulties are investigated in this study. Through this study, farmers will approach the government or any other entity that may be able to assist them.

Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework is to determine farmer production in the face of the epidemic. This pandemic has a wide range of effects on agriculture and food systems, from food production and processing to distribution and consumption. The pandemic's intricate linkages have affected all five aspects of farmer productivity: food supply, market access, stability, use, and sustainability. Food production, transit, processing, marketing, and consumption were all affected by the accompanying lockdown, limits on physical movement, transportation constraints, and the closure of some companies. They have caused labor shortages, interrupted supply chains, and impacted agriculture harvests, cultivation, and marketing. Crops that need a lot of labor, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, have been particularly hard hit. The lockdowns have also impacted agricultural input supply networks, such as fertilizers. This takes into account the entire agri-food sector, including farm-based primary agricultural production, the supply chain that connects farmers to consumers, and associated service providers. According to the findings, small farmers have trouble getting inputs and finding a market for their produce, while purchasers such as agribusiness corporations and wholesalers have trouble getting the quantity and quality of products they require promptly. Government assistance can assist in overcoming this market failure by bringing buyers and producers together and offering assistance in developing and implementing viable business plans that benefit both sides. Farmers who are already connected to the market and have access to commercial markets exist. To top it off, the epidemic has had an impact on agricultural operations, transportation, and marketing. It has been highlighted again during this pandemic that the food supply chain is vulnerable to any catastrophe, and that protecting it from shocks requires specific preparation and planning.

The flow of the Research Process

Farmers' production in San Isidro Jasaan is evaluated based on problems and possibilities. The main argument for this was that farmers could make the research process more efficient. Even more

crucially, they were expected to contribute meaningfully to the research process in their way. Scientists in agriculture are working hard to develop procedures that will boost livestock and grain harvests, as well as improve farmland productivity. One of the most fundamental elements behind the growth of the agricultural system approach was the participation of corporation farmers in the research process. Asia accounts for more than 90% of global aquaculture production, according to Melba G. Bondad-Reantaso (2005). Aquaculture, like other farming systems, is beset by disease concerns as a result of its intensification and commercialization. This paper discusses the different reasons that have contributed to the current illness challenges encountered by the world's fastest-growing food-producing sector, with particular instances. This paper aims and focuses only on the assessment of challenges and opportunities during a pandemic on local farmers' productivity.

Method

A quali/quanti method was used in this study and randomly selected 100 respondents that comprise the farmer's classifications. Since the time that this study was conducted, government restrictions are still in effect and the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) enforced policy, the mode of data gathering is a combination of limited face-to-face and utilizes a platform as a mechanism that supplements the efforts of the data gathering. The target respondents were given an equal opportunity to answer the same questionnaire where responses are recorded for further analytical review. Those respondents not available during the conduct of this study were interviewed using the social media platforms like calls by setting an appointment. Google meets, and even Skype whenever is convenient to respondents. Information gathered was carefully tallied and tabulated to ensure its veracity, credibility, and validity. The respondent's observation covering twelve (12) months from June 2020 to 2021 was used to benchmark some competent initiatives in sustaining its operation. Reinforced data from other sources like the Department of Agriculture (DA). Some important information drawn from selective face-to-face interviews following the mandated safety protocol from the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) is carefully observed. Thus their executive reports received descriptively were triangulated to the ethnographic notes of the field researchers on the period specified. Since the study deals with the assessment of challenges and opportunities during the pandemic on local farmers' productivity in San Isidro, Jasaan Misamis Oriental, the element of "truth" in the qualitative data, exchange of ideas, and other methods of generating prepondering shreds of evidence were carefully recorded.

The Locale of the Study

This study will be conducted at the selected households of Barangay San Isidro in Jasaan Misamis Oriental. The Municipality covers 17minutes of 6.9 square kilometers by car, while it takes 16 minutes on a motorcycle, and walking consists of 1 hour and 28 minutes. According to this statement, the population density is 700 households**.** The locale of this study is San Isidro Jasaan Misamis Oriental, which is located in Mindanao. San Isidro is one of the Barangay of Jasaan, in the province of Misamis Oriental. Its population as determined by the 2020 Census was 1,364. This represents 2.39% of the total population of Jasaan. The population of San Isidro grew from 652 in 1990 to 1,364 in 2020, an increase of 712 people over 30 years. The latest census figures in 2020 denote a growth rate of 3.60%, or an increase of 211 people, from the previous population of 1,153 in 2015. San Isidro is situated at approximately 8.6240, 124.7973, on the island of Mindanao. Elevation at these coordinates is estimated at 89.8% meters or 294.6 feet above mean sea level.

The Respondents of the Study

Table 1 shows the information of the respondents of the study

Age Bracket	Number	Percent
25-30	28	28
31-45	15	15
46-55	51	51
56 above	6	6
Total	**100**	**100%**

The table above shows the ages of farmers engaged in the profession. It can be seen from the table that the majority of the farmers were above the maturity age of 46-55, 28 percent from ages 25-30, followed by 15 for ages 31-45, and 6 for 56 above years of age. The younger age bracket implies that farming as a profession does not require any qualification, and it can be adjudged that those younger ages engaged in farming choose this endeavor rather than be in school.

The Scoring Procedures

Table 2 shows the process of scoring based on range.

Range	*Mean*	*Description*	*Interpretation*
5	4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree	Always
4	3.41-4.20	Agree	Very Often
3	2.61-3.40	Moderately Agree	Sometimes
2	1-81-2.60	Disagree	Rarely
1	1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Never

Distribution of the respondents in terms of Marital Status

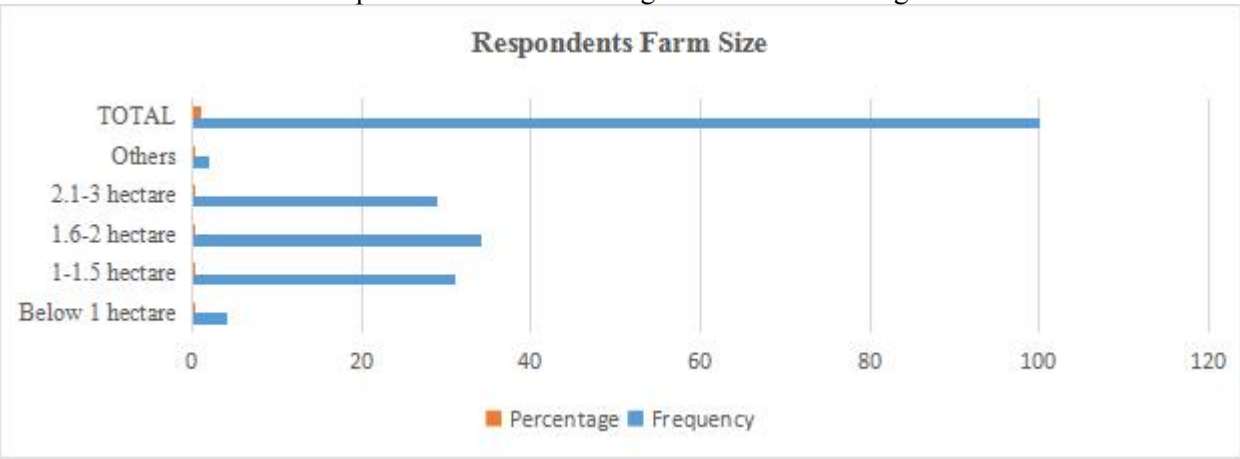
Table 3 shows the profile of the respondents according to Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	31	31%
Married	59	59%
Widow	10	10%
Total	100	100%

The table above shows the respondent's distribution according to their status. The farming profession is more preferred by married persons represented by 59 respondents in the table at 59 percent. This implies that although the type of profession is an exertion of effort, many married people choose this profession.

Distribution of Respondents in terms of Farm Size

Table 4 shows the respondent's farm size being cultivated in farming



The table above shows that information about the sizes of land being cultivated for farming. The largest among the respondents represented as farming is 1.6 to 2 hectares and the rest are just minimal when it comes to land sizes.

Findings and Discussions

The assessment of challenges and opportunities during the pandemic on local farmer's productivity in San Isidro, Jasaan Misamis Oriental considers "challenges" as 1) production cost, 2) market access, 3) government policies, "opportunities" as 4) government support, 5) competition level and 6) demand on local production are amongst the elements affected during the pandemic that hinders the achievement of productivity to farmers that need to be reviewed and the finding below are:

ON PRODUCTION COST

The cost of production is always the yardstick in a decision making whether or not to pursue whatever endeavor one may consider. Study of Bless (2006) states that the purpose of a literature review is to sharpen and deepen the theoretical framework of the research presented in a particular area, familiarize the researcher with the latest developments in that research area and identify gaps in knowledge as well as weakness of previous studies. Challenges of COVID-19 in Agricultural Production in Sinana District, according to Meskerem Abebe and Alemayehu Legesse, et al (2022). One of the obstacles during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to farmers' responses, was the shortage of and/or stoppage of agricultural inputs such as inorganic fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides. In this regard, over three-quarters of the respondents (741 or 74.8 percent) stated that they were seriously impacted and unable to obtain such agricultural inputs, resulting in very low productivity. Because of the nationwide partial lockdown and restricted public movement, there was a shortage of labor. As a result, more than half of the respondents (517, or 52.2%) said they couldn't find enough laborers to help with their agricultural activities during the pandemic. Similarly, a considerable number of respondents (632 or 63.8 percent) stated that they had significant postharvest losses, particularly fruits, vegetables, and dairy products (milk, meat, and other products). Larger numbers of respondents (675 or 68.1 percent) have experienced severe food insecurity as a result of COVID-19 difficulties. In terms of monetary income from agricultural products, farmers' expected monthly income has decreased. The respondents' estimated median monthly income before and during COVID-19 was 1600 and 800 Birr, respectively. The estimated median monthly income of the respondents before and during COVID-19 was 1600 and 800

Birr/month, respectively. Opportunities of COVID-19 in Agricultural Production of Farmers in Sinana District. Out of the total individuals in the study, only one hundred fifteen farmers(11.6%) practiced innovation in irrigation, and 328 (33.1%) of them obtained modernization in their agricultural production systems such as the use of tractors and combines. According to Neil J. Rowan and Charis M. Galanakis (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic is on a trajectory to cause catastrophic global upheaval with the potential to alter geopolitical and socio-economic norms. Many countries are frantically responding with staggering financial stimulus recovery initiatives. This opinion paper reviews challenges, opportunities, and potential solutions for the post-COVID-19 era that focuses on intensive sustaining of the agri-food supply chain in tandem with meeting the high demand for new green deal innovation. For example, the development of wet peatland innovation, known as Paludiculture, can intensively sustain and blend agri-food and green innovations that will help support the COVID-19 pandemic transition. The future looks bright for the creation of new sustainability multi-actor innovation hubs that will support, connect, and enable businesses to recover and pivot beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. The nexus between the first 'Green Deal' initiative supporting 64 selected European start-ups and SMEs (European Innovation Council) and 43 Irish Disruptive Technology projects are addressed in the context of cross-cutting developments and relevance to COVID-19. Candidate areas for future consideration will focus on climate action, digitization, manufacturing, sustainable food production, security, and waste mitigation. Recommendations are also provided to facilitate community transitioning, training, enterprise, and employment in a low-carbon economy.

A study was conducted to check how vulnerable the cost of production can affect different areas involving the exploration of the farming activity and the results are shown in the table below.

Table 5 shows the responses to production cost

Indicators	Mean	Description	Interpretation
1.) Do you consider the following elements challenging your production? (Gikonsiderar ba nimo ang mosunod nga mga hagit sa imong produksiyon?)	3.17	Agree	Very often
2. Does the supplies in production increase? (Nadugangan ba ang mga suplay sa produksiyon)	2.37	Disagree	Rarely
3. Do you consider increasing salaries for laborers? (Gikonsiderar ba nimo ang pagtaas sa sweldo sa mga mamumuo)	2.63	Moderately agree	Sometimes
4 Costly expense / In every operation does it costly (Mahal nga gasto /Sa matag operasyon mahal ba kini)	2.95	Moderately agree	Sometimes
5. Do consumable materials decrease (Nagkunhod ba ang mga materyales nga magamit	2.80	Moderately agree	Sometimes
6. The rise in cost as a percentage (Ang pagtaas sa gasto ingon usa ka porsyento)	2.70	Moderately agree	Sometimes
7. The real average output rate per hour (Ang tinuud nga average nga rate sa output matag oras)	2.77 2.78	Moderately agree	Sometimes
General Average	3.17	Agree	Very often

The table above shows the extent of challenges of farmers as they faced the tremendous effect brought by the pandemic. The general average means found that it is very often that farming ventures face different challenges which respondents agree. They consider the following as challenges to their

production. However, they agree that the supplies in production were increasing, while both of them moderately agree on the following areas like considering an increase in salaries for laborers, facing higher cost expense / in every operation, that due to a higher price, consumer goods or materials decreases, the rise in cost affects their earning as a percentage, and the real average output rate per hour increases.

It can be gleaned in the responses by the farmer that this task faces challenges to some degree as it is manifested that everything in terms of price and cost goes up. With this unfavorable circumstance, it is viewed to demotivate farmers' desire in exploring production since they forecasted that eventually, they will be at the losing end. This might result to lower productivity which creates turmoil and problem for the government which will affect society as a whole. The finding seems critical and the government's ultimate option is to export these goods to some other countries which in turn brings a long-term effect on local farmers. The economy in this sector will be affected and recovery requires a lot of strategic initiatives and bring unfavorable impact that the government should find ways addressing this misfortune that the farmer faces. These observations and findings are aligned with the study by (Pasaribu, E. M. W., & Hasanuh, N. 2021), that the effect of production cost and operating costs on the income of the consumers reduces. This will indicate that partially production costs have a significant effect on net income. Simultaneously, production costs and operating costs have a significant influence on net income.

ON MARKET ACCESS

Every government's perceptions in service to the society most especially those that are doing farming always the tidbits of their mainstream goals. The small-scale farmers should be provided with key insights and perspectives on the phenomenon based on their experiences in the provision and access to extensive support services. Timely because our newly elected president Ferdinand E. Marcos Jr. is so concerned about farming activities to gradually solve the crisis not only brought by the pandemic but there is a variety of problems that need to be taken care of. The small-scale agricultural community requires not so long to travel from the nearest town. Making access to products produced encourages farmers to explore beyond since they can benefit the movement of the economy through an exchange of value. Bringing the product from its location to its destination can only be made possible when access through the development of essential farm-to-market roads. The extending of support and services is the responsibility that should be provided to farmers as part of accessibility in fulfilling the market requirements.

Market accessibility does not define itself as a term but this includes some access to other supplementary services used in farming activity. The interventions to address small-scale farmers' access to the market include improved accessibility to extension support services that promoted the training of small-scale farmers on the implementation of every farming tool. It requires a formal direct contract which in the context of this study is described as a legal agreement between a local supermarket and a small-scale farmer for the forward production of produce, with clearly established requirements, such as a model that includes product expectations such as quantity, quality, and delivery timing, and a payment contract. The study found that small-scale farmers in rural areas were unable to reach markets because of low production quantity (unit of produce required) and quality (the condition of produce). This study maintains that this is common in rural areas because the majority of small-scale farmers do not have the productive resources, such as agricultural inputs, fertilizers, and irrigation systems, and marketing financial resources, such as transport, packaging, and storage facilities, to retain the quality of production. As a result, Okunlola et al. (2016) confirm that many small-scale farmers do not have formal contracts with any market and rely on informal arrangements to sell their items at whatever market price is available. This study shows that informal arrangements for markets link small-scale farmers and low-income consumers, but the supply market decides on the price and type of product required. As a result, this study indicates that small-scale farmers choose informal markets to sell and buy agricultural products to secure their livelihoods and food security, despite the evolution of formal and restricted markets. In contrast, a few small-scale farmers attested that they had formal contracts with at least one local

supermarket. A study was conducted to check the degree of its effectiveness in terms of market accessibility that aid in the success of the farmer's endeavor and the finding is shown in the table below.

Table 6 shows the responses based on market access

Indicators	Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. Encountering these challenges in Market Access?	3.02	Moderately agree	Sometimes
(Nasugatan ba nimo kini nga mga hagit sa pag-access sa Market?)			
2. Difficulties of supplies in making product	3.52	Agree	Very often
(Mga kalisud sa mga suplay sa paghimo sa produkto			
3. Hard to access market due to lots of permits.	3.52	Agree	Very often
(Lisud nga ma-access ang merkado tungod sa daghang mga permit.)			
4. Limited Products to be imported	2.89	Moderately agree	Sometimes
(Limitado nga Produkto nga i-import)			
5. Exporting limited product	3.06	Moderately agree	Sometimes
(Pag-eksport sa limitado nga produkto)			
6. Marketing techniques and approaches were utilized	2.98	Moderately agree	Sometimes
(Gigamit ang mga teknik ug pamaagi sa pagpamaligya			
7. Defects in the financial infrastructure	2.62	Moderately agree	Sometimes
(Mga depekto sa pinansyal nga imprastraktura			
General Average	3.02	Moderately agree	Sometimes

The table above shows the responses about market access. The general average of 3.02 defines the respondent's reaction to market access as moderately agree which denotes that they seldom observe the quality market access provided by them. Sometimes they noted that sometimes encountered challenges when it comes to market access, that they have limited products to import, they also experience limited exporting of products, that they utilize different techniques and approaches in creating market access, and noted to have defective financial structure.

On the other hand, the respondents agree that very often, they experience difficulties with supplies and materials used to produce the products, and find it hard to access to market due to a lot of requisites to do. The findings observed by the respondents are subjective which means that since market access is the primordial igniting element, developing and standardizing the concept of market access should be updated to the point it can compete with another system. According to (FAO. 2016), local farmers and food processors could improve the efficiency of their operations and thus contribute to increasing the share of domestic. A close collaboration between farmers and buyers under the win-win contract farming agreements can address some of the agricultural food challenges faced by small farmers and agribusiness.

ON GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Farmers are extremely attentive to governmental policy, especially the regulations generated by the Environmental Protection Agency, but also tax policy, trade policy, and conservation policy.

Immigration policy has recently moved to the forefront of farmers' minds due to the necessity of finding labor and the rising costs to farmers of the current farm worker visa program. There are so many rules, regulations, and laws emanating from federal agencies and Congress that monitoring them in detail becomes a time-consuming undertaking. Hot button issues dominate the debate but much iceberg that is federal and state policy remains below the surface. A current hot button is the Chesapeake Bay TMDL issued by EPA in 2010 which describes the "pollution diet" impacting six states in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Many consider this plan to be a model for future mandates to be implemented in other parts of the nation. For each law, rule, regulation, or policy decision that captures farmers' attention, there are a great many more that impact the farm economy in fairly complicated, complex ways.

What governmental policies should farmers and farm advocates watch closely? The list should include things that weigh heavily on-farm profitability and on the license to farm with minimal restriction. The imposition of federal policy impacting farmers at various levels should be specific. Those employed to monitor state and federal policy will have their lists of hot button items. Land prices – the value of farmland is influenced directly and indirectly by federal fiscal policy, federal and state tax policy, conservation policy, and economic decisions made by the government. Is it possible that an overheated market for farmland could hurt farm interests? That tax policy could impede transitioning farms to new generations of farmers? That government policy could inflate land rents? At a minimum, a good understanding of cause and effect should be established regarding policy and farmland values. Commodity prices – how does governmental policy influence the price of commodities? The policy does have an impact and the ethanol mandate leaps to mind as an example. The 1980 U.S. embargo of grain sales to the Soviet Union may be novel at the extreme. Programs included in the current Farm Bill have the potential to affect planted acreage, storage, and marketing decisions so some impact is inevitable. Protections that regulate the impact of speculators in grain futures markets and economic policy that creates inflationary demand for grain and other farm products are other examples.

Farm input costs – energy costs are susceptible to both market and regulatory forces. Pesticides and fertilizer costs are susceptible to these same forces, plus their application is strictly regulated. The governmental policy can tamp down demand for a product by limiting or restricting its use. Fuel and products can be taxed and currently existing tax benefits can be rescinded. While the farm economy has enjoyed some shelter from taxes on input purchases, on equipment, and even on property valued at its highest value, many states are re-thinking tax codes and farmers may stand to lose. Technology costs – the federal government is the gatekeeper for introducing potentially productive technologies like GMO seed traits into the market, and also for deciding the approved uses of a variety of pesticides and pharmaceutical products. The speed and manner in which these products come to market influences their cost and their efficacy. It is of course up to the farmer what technology he or she chooses to employ, but the industry as a whole has to bear the cost of reduced efficiency when there is a delay in introducing new products to the market. The Farm Safety Net – the safety net refers to the farm policies in the federal Farm Bill plus crop insurance provisions handled through other legislation. The Farm Bill is designed to take the volatility out of annual farm revenues plus it aims to achieve additional benefits like conserving natural resources and encouraging innovation in production. The commodity title of the Farm Bill is the core component aimed at farm incomes. Its genuine purpose is to provide some clarity and predictability to the farm-scale business cycle. Critics inside and outside of government question the proper role of government in supporting the farm economy, resulting in a farm policy increasingly shaped by political pressures. This is not unique. All developed and developing nations tend to adopt policies to protect their farmers from economic forces beyond their control. Since the farming activity lies on the support of the government to succeed, a study was conducted to assess how government policies aid the needs of the farmers and the result is shown in the table below.

Table 7 shows the responses in terms of government policies

Indicators	Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. Did the following government policy and regulation consider a challenge to your farm's day-to-day operation? (Gikonsiderar ba sa mosunod nga polisiya ug regulasyon sa gobyerno nga usa ka hagit sa adlaw-adlaw nga operasyon sa imong umahan?)	3.61	Agree	Very Often
2. No Barangay exit pass is strictly prohibited (Walay barangay exit pass ang hugot nga gidili)	3.61	Agree	Very Often
3. Public Health Service Act	3.61	Agree	Very Often
4. Registration of a company	3.61	Agree	Very Often
5. Safety in the workplace	3.61	Agree	Very Often
6. Protection of the environment	3.61	Agree	Very Often
General Average	**3.61**	**Agree**	**Very Often**

The table shows how the respondents (Farmers) assess the government imposition in terms of policies and the way it is implemented. As shown from the table, the respondents noted that very often, the government policies help them in their farming efforts and they both agree that government policy and regulations consider a challenge to your farm's day-to-day operation, the implementation of the localized government mandate on no exit pass not allowed to go out, there is a prevailing threat of public health concern, any business activity needs the permission of the government and the company's registration and approval, safety in the workplace is deemed a sole responsibility in doing farming tasks, and protection in the environment is always a challenge by farmers in the workplace. The government policies of controlling the movement of the people include farming activity despite that as we all know, food is badly needed by people as consumers. Although the farmers feel discomfort with the imposed regulations of the government, abiding by the mandate is the only recourse. In the earlier time and the assumption of the new leadership, governance is hoped to establish a policy that somehow gives freedom to farmers to perform as the pandemic crisis is now on its downtrend. In a study by (Afifah, A. N., Masyhuri, M., Suryantini, A., & Waluyati, L. R. 2019), based on research, the farmer needs a subsidy to improve their activity and strengthens networks, and acquire new and modern inputs to increase productivity, raise competitiveness as well as government needs to maintain the import tariff policy to help in sustaining and meeting the needs for the period of recovery.

ON GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

The success of the support extended by the government to farmers will ensure the welfare of the consumers. The trust to ensure adequate, accessible, and affordable food for all affected by the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), the Department of Agriculture (DA) continues to safeguard farming activity. The effort made by the department is a tireless move and focuses on providing food for consumers and fighting hunger in the middle of the pandemic. As front-liners, the department does not limit to finding ways to meet the need of the people but extend beyond by providing the so-called financial aides or assistance to support the farmers which summed up to more than 1.2 million farmers in 57 rice-producing provinces. The aid is not only provided to a vast area of cropping but also to those tilling minimum sizes of agricultural land area. The initiative is intended to give protection and assurance that farmers will then survive amidst the pandemic and this was supported by the legislators that the department is doing their best to ensure utmost welfare to farmers, producers, and consumers.

Government support was then a humanitarian initiative since, with no exemption, all are affected, and surviving is not that easy. However, this given support is just temporary which means that farmers

should do their part in building the economy to greater heights, and hence, this requires a review of how the government support to farmers becomes effective. A study was conducted to review the effectiveness of the government support during the pandemic crisis experience in the local municipalities under study and the data is shown in the table below.

Table 8 shows the responses in terms of government support

Indicators	Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. Getting these governments' support when the strike of pandemic starts?	*2.70*	*Moderately agree*	*Sometimes*
2. Loan Program that offers zero interest to small farmers and fisheries	2.71	Moderately agree	Sometimes
3. Receiving Non-Government (NGO) Support	2.69	Moderately agree	Sometimes
4. Going Distribution of Goods during Pandemic.	2.68	Moderately agree	Sometimes
5. Farmers' financial assistance	2.73	Moderately agree	Sometimes
6. Proper Disposal of wasted product	2.71	Moderately agree	Sometimes
7. Employment protection for those self-isolating	2.72	Moderately agree	Sometimes
General Average	2.71	Moderately agree	Sometimes

The table above shows the responses by the respondents in terms of how effective is government support in times when the economy faces the test of time. The findings garnered an overall general average of 2.72 which means that sometimes the government supports helps the farmers and they moderately agree as to its effectiveness, gets these governments support when the strike pandemic starts, they are receiving Non-Government (NGO) support, that a loan program was provided and offers zero interest to small farmers and fisheries, presence of a distribution of goods during Pandemic, provides farmers financial assistance, orient farmers on proper disposal wasted product, and Employment protection for those self-isolating. The findings are found to be unanimous and conflicting since the government has provided the farmers with enough assistance and support but the respondents seem not to appreciate the government initiatives. It can be seen from the way the farmers as respondents of this study and this can draw an implication that the efforts extended to them (the farmers) were found to be insufficient as the presence of the gap is evident. This suggests that there should be a thorough review of the mode of assisting farmers for making them effective in a way, it will bridge the gap in terms of earnings brought about by some restrictions and limitations. These findings are supported by the study of Bardsby, T. (2019), a report that warns about the consequences of future food shortages and focuses on the current failures of the global food system. He argues that government must support sustainable farming and target the funding to improve agricultural productivity.

ON COMPETITION LEVEL

In every walks of life, competition is always there and their mere presence creates an impact of leverage that will promote one step higher standing in the arena that is being measured by efficiency. The competition level in the field of farming can be exhibited in the form of quality products that are comparable to others. However, despite competition developing an advantage, this will also create some

form of disadvantages. One over the other competition is a phenomenon of globalization. Nowadays, to exist in whatever endeavor one may in connection with requires a mindset of globalization that bring together global activities beyond boundaries. In the farming industry, the aimed fair competition especially in a crisis time found to be very strong as it is surrounded by products represented from other countries which bring disadvantages to the local growers. This study is aimed at examining how competition level brings and what intervention facility the government instills in paving the way for the influx of foreign products in the local and international market.

Focusing on price and quality, the local farmers can be at a disadvantage side since technically, the competing countries nowadays use some advanced technology that can produce more in terms of volume and the quality itself is more competitive due to the introduction of technology. This is the battle cry of the local farmers that seek assistance from the government as they face the level of competition that is undoubtedly more dominant and prefers buyers. The local farmers specifically in the area of the study feared much since they cannot be able to compete with other producing countries, the prevalence of the pandemic pressed them down to the level wherein bouncing back seems impossible. A study was conducted to determine ways how to counter the prevalence of competition entered into by different countries. The findings and results are shown in the table below.

Table 9 shows the responses in terms of competition level

Indicators	Mean	Description	Interpretation
Did you consider the following as an opportunity in a weak competition?	2.78	Moderately agree	Sometimes
Product demand decrease	3.12	Moderately agree	Sometimes
Losses of consistent consumer	2.82	Moderately agree	Sometimes
Imported products decreases	2.88	Moderately agree	Sometimes
Production of goods to be exported	2.90	Moderately agree	Sometimes
Decreases an individual company	3.01	Moderately agree	Sometimes
Lower Prices to stay competitive	3.02	Moderately agree	Sometimes
General Average	**2.95**	**Moderately agree**	**Sometimes**

The above table shows the result of the farmer's survey in terms of competition levels wherein they seek assistance from the government to remain in the business amidst the trying times as the local farmer under study feels. The general average was found to be that only sometimes does the government extend support to the local farmers which both of their assessments as they moderately agree in terms of considering the following as an opportunity when competition is weak, product demand decreases for local farmers when there are plenty of competing products in the market, they also feel that they lose consistent consumers as they shifted to foreign items, imported products decreases when local produced are available, the local product quality can be exported, decreases individual company income generation, and making the product locally reduced its price to remain competitive. The findings between respondents are unanimously consistent as they are inclined to agree on the variables used in the conduct of the survey all of them feel sometimes the government expresses a sentiment of help. These findings suggest that for the local farmers to stay in the field, a reduction of entry on foreign products should be controlled. These findings did not suggest disallowing foreign products to come in but the government should control over

types of products allowed in the local markets. Identify what is not available and cannot be provided by local producers and allows entry only to those not prevalent in the market. The study (Grala, D. T. 2020) on agricultural reforms also suggests that farming and agriculture's key resources which were a subject of competition include the advanced technology for them to excel.

ON-DEMAND ON LOCAL PRODUCTION

The demand for local production is an option to be made by consumers. A patriotic mentality like Singapore is very overwhelming since the majority of people patronized products grown locally than from other countries. This act shows strong support to local farmers as their preference falls on what is the so-called homegrown products. In the case of other countries like Japan, they are also very patriotic and they tried to explore new possibilities and used it in their daily existence in a way, it helps their local producers and resulted in stabilized their economy. In the case of rice farming, in the market today, we seldom see locally grown and produced products available in the market. In this instance, the local producers suffer as the demand for their products outweighs the foreign preferences. Many modern rice varieties (MVs) have been released but only a few have been widely adopted by farmers. To understand farmers' preferences, we characterized MVs released in the Philippines from 1966 to 2013 and identified important characteristics of the varieties that were widely adopted in Central Luzon using farm surveys conducted from 1966-2012. We found that farmers adopt the market value (MVs) that are high yielding, mature faster, and have long and slender grains, high milling recovery, and intermediate amylose content. The amylose content of adopted varieties has been declining, suggesting value in developing softer rice. However, in the present times, the rice market is flooded by outscored by the government. This initiative reduces the stability of the local farmers in their quest of producing sustainable products. A study was conducted to assess the demand for local production as the subject of the study. The result of the survey and responses is shown in the table below.

Table 10 shows the responses in terms of demand for local production

Indicators	Mean	Description	Interpretation
Do you consider the following as an opportunity to create High Demand for Local Products?	3.14	Moderately agree	Sometimes
An increase in demand requires great distribution of goods for local products.	2.98	Moderately agree	Sometimes
Demand for local product	3.07	Moderately agree	Sometimes
Continuous demand growth	2.98	Moderately agree	Sometimes
Strong Sales	2.97	Moderately agree	Sometimes
Higher interest rates reduce the cost of such products	3.02	Moderately agree	Sometimes
Overprice products	3.10	Moderately agree	Sometimes
General Average	**3.03**	**Moderately agree**	**Sometimes**

The table above shows the result of the survey about their responses in terms of the demand for local production. It can be seen from the table that they sometimes feel that people prefer to use the locally produced products as they moderately agree as revealed in the general average. They moderately

agree that they consider the following as opportunities to create high demand for local products, demand increase requires a great distribution package for local products, design a strategy that will increase the demand for local products, and designing an activity that creates a continuous growth, sales must be strong, that higher rates cause the cost reduction, and experiencing over pricing. The finding as viewed by the respondents serves as an eye-opener to people with the concern of the local producers. It is a culture that once new foreign products enter the market, people tend to patronize them for having a feeling of quality and their initiative pressed down the local producers. It can be observed that it is the attitude of the consumers that puts the local producers down undermining that local producers need them to survive. The findings and observations of the local producers are beyond the control of the government however, as a mechanism of helping them, it is suggested that a modification of policy be imposed by the government mandating the use of locally made products to help the economy grow, glow and gloom. These findings are supported by the study of (Kinnunen, P., Guillaume, J. H. A., Taka, M., D'Odorico, P., Siebert, S., Puma, M. J., Jalava, M., & Kummu, M. 2020), the distance between the origin and end-point of food supply chains, and the 'localness' of food systems, are key considerations of many narratives associated with sustainability. Although yield and gap closure and food loss reductions could favor more local food systems and ensure an adequate and stable food supply.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The assessment of the challenges and opportunities during the pandemic on local farmers under study was found to be helpless as they see different misfortune in today's environment. They consider this fight played by them without government intervention to aid the battle of crisis. They feel demotivated by their desire to explore beyond since the event gives them the hint of losing at the end. They also viewed it that will lower their productivity which somehow created turmoil that could affect society as a whole. It is also critical to local farmers if the control of entry on foreign products will only be an option by the government and there is a free flow of foreign goods. The economy and the society are considered a recipient of the effect suggests that the government should revisit the structure of control over the entry of foreign products as one way of helping the local producer that suffers not only the concurrence of the pandemic but also how the governance in terms of its consistency on the implementation and control. It is further concluded that the only way to control these discomforts, is for the government to impose regulation, and abiding by the mandate is the only recourse. Although, they are positive that other good things might happen and eventually bring them to the pedestal due to the new governance, and hope to establish a policy that somehow gives them the freedom to perform more so that the pandemic is now on its downtrend.

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