

Consequences of Household Members Out-Migration on Land Use: a Case Study of Nang Rong, Buriram Province

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Abstract

This research explored the pattern of household land use by considering the “plot” - a commonly locally understood term for a certain unit of land - as the unit of analysis. Data was taken from “The Demographic Responses to a Changing Environment in Nang Rong, Buriram Province (2000)”. The amount of out-migrants in households, the patterns of out-migration and personal characteristics of out-migrants were the predictors. It was expected that out-migration would affect land use. The research hypotheses were that the amount of out-migrants in households would be related to agricultural land use in a curvilinear relationship and it was believed that out-migration of household members, both short-term and long-term, would be related to a reduction in cultivated land. Besides this, it was expected that personal characteristics might be related to differences in land use.

It was found that when the amount of out-migrants in household, both short-term and long-term, increased, households would be less likely to use land for agriculture and land formerly used as paddy fields would be likely to become wasteland in a curvilinear correlation. When considering the various kinds of cultivation, it was found that a higher number of out-migrants was related to increased planting of perennial crops, such as fruit trees. This relationship suggested that households decided to invest long-term instead of short-term as they had done previously. As regards the land characteristic factors, the most important were land documentation and location. For the household factors, the most important were land ownership, size of labour force and amount of remittances. An interesting finding was that there was no positive correlation between the amount of remittance and perennial crops.

In conclusion, the households had enough labour force in the place of origin, land was legally documented and households had enough remittances to invest in agriculture. These households tended to use land for agricultural cultivation and this reduces the problem of wasteland which brings no economic benefit.