

## Abstract

Smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) seek to improve their livelihood through diversification of crops, livestock production systems and non-farm activities. This study was conducted in the cotton growing areas in Mali, which constitutes the major agricultural production zone in Mali. This study examines crops diversification strategies and identifies the main factors that influence diversification strategies. Cross-sectional data were obtained from 134 selected randomly smallholder farmers in three villages drawn from different agro-ecological zones in Southern Mali. A multinomial logistics (MNL) regression model was used to estimate the main factors that determine diversification strategies of smallholder farmers. Results from MNL model revealed that the age of family head, education level, family size, oxen ownership, farm income per capita and crop pest significantly influenced families' participation in the four diversification strategies. Policy interventions should be employed to encourage and promote profit-oriented activities through diversification strategies. Institutional interventions should be implemented to increase smallholder farmers access to inputs and both agricultural and non-agricultural credit.