

Are Women Less Capable in Managing Crops? Insights from Cotton Production in Northern China

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Abstract

Women's performance in agriculture matters, as women are becoming increasingly involved in agricultural production worldwide. Many studies have demonstrated that women-led farms perform less well as a result of less access to production factors, but no studies focus on how women perform without this constraint. This study fills that gap by analyzing the case of cotton cropping, which is known for its high labor requirements, high production inputs, and need for technical knowledge. Using primary data collected in northern China over the 2006-9 period, it uses the concept of "Daily Crop Management" (DCM) and identifies DCM farms managed by women whose husbands were engaged in off-farm activities on a long-term basis. The study finds that one-third of all farms were female-DCM farms, that these were smaller than those of their male counterparts but had equal access to production factors and achieved equal if not better technical and economic performances.

English abstract

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