Is Implementing a Biotech Ban Correct or Not? Analysis of Farmer Perceptions and Attitudes on the Philippine Supreme Court’s Ban on Biotech Crops

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Abstract: Several studies have explored the effects of restrictive policies in different case-use instances; however, studies focusing on restrictive agricultural policies and their effects on major stakeholders are scarce. While the Philippines has been increasing its support for biotech-related technologies in agriculture, such as the recent approval of Golden Rice and Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis) eggplant for cultivation, the years prior to 2020 have not been as lenient in the acceptance of biotech crops. In the Dupont Summit 2022, I will present our paper that explored the perceptions and attitudes of biotech corn farmers on the Philippine Supreme Court’s ban on biotech crops in 2015. I will also discuss how this restrictive agricultural policy could affect rural Filipino communities.

In our paper, a bifurcation was observed regarding the farmers’ ban perception, with almost half indicating that implementing the ban was an incorrect decision. The effects of the decision-making stages and influential factors on farmers’ perceived correctness of the ban were modeled using ordinal logistic regression and Spearman correlation. It was observed that while farmers’ initial instinct is directly related to their ban perception, succeeding decision-making stages enforce the notion of a pragmatic point of view leading to innate resistance effects towards the ban. Furthermore, internal factors (such as income and satisfaction) and external family-related factors perturb their ban perception. This information can offer guidance on how future restrictive agricultural policies may be framed to avoid conflicting interests between policymakers and stakeholders. This also highlights the need to understand farmer perspectives and attitudes to gain critical information regarding technology adoption and development.

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