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sciforum-139045: is lotus a viable alternative crop in low-lying agricultural areas? Evidence from Thua Thien Hue province, central Vietnam

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Crop conversion has become an increasingly important strategy for climate adaptation and for overcoming the limitations of traditional farming systems, particularly in low-lying regions. This study, focusing on lotus farming in Thua Thien Hue Province, examines the adoption and impact of lotus as an alternative to rice in flood-prone areas that are at high risk of being abandoned due to low agricultural efficiency. Based on data collected from direct interviews with 101 households in the Phong Dien and Quang Dien districts, this research highlights the critical influence of land-use policies on crop switching. While efforts to promote crop diversification have enabled farmers to transition to alternative crops, restrictive rice land protection policies continue to hinder the expansion of high-value alternatives, such as lotus. This study further explores the adaptive strategies employed by farmers. It analyzes five-year land-use histories to identify ongoing challenges in lotus cultivation, such as vulnerability to erratic weather, pest and disease outbreaks, and high input costs. Despite these obstacles, lotus farming emerges as a viable and economically promising option for marginal lands. These findings underscore the need for changes in land-use policies, increased investment in local lotus varieties, and enhanced agricultural support services to improve the long-term sustainability of lotus and other high-value alternative crops.



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