

Category	: 8th Rice Genetics Symposium
Select Theme	: Sustainable and equitable farming systems
Endorsement email	:
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Keyword 2	: Nutrient management
Keyword 3	: Weed management
Title of Entry	: Rice Sector performance and challenges in Nepal: an analytical review
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Select only one type of presentation	: 15 minute oral presentation

Abstract : Rice is the life line of Nepal contributing to 67% of cereal and 23% of protein consumption. Rice yield growth in last three decades is far from satisfactory in the country. In spite of emphasis by all the periodic development plans and policies for the development and promotion of rice sub sector in Nepal, annual growth rate of rice area in last 65 years was 0.35% while growth in rice production in the same period remained around 1%. Considering the population growth of 2% in last five decades and 1.35% in the year of 2001-2011, the growth of rice production is still far below average population growth indicating the decline in per capita availability. Rice yield gap of 50 to 75% in different rice production domains meant that US\$ 250 to 300 million worth of rice is imported every year. Rice import is accelerated in Nepal every year because of gradual shift in consumption pattern of Nepali people from medium and coarse to fine and aromatic types of rice. Inadequate access to improved technologies and services, inadequate knowledge to use improved technologies, declining farmland, climate change, low productivity and profitability of agriculture, changing market demand, weak access to market, subsistence type of production system, and low investment in research and development are key challenges facing Nepal's rice sector. As a staple food and major contributor to agriculture gross domestic product (AGDP), failure to increase rice productivity growth has multiple and serious implications such as food insecurity, draining of development funds for importing rice, trade imbalance, high inflation, increasing rural poverty and political instability. Improving and sustaining significant rice productivity growth is vital to contribute to multiple dimensions of development and achieving several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The paper reviews over 50 years of technological, institutional, and policy progress and performance in rice sector in Nepal and critically analyzes gaps and opportunities in relation to the use of rice science and technologies, critical mass, financial resource allocations and identifies opportunities for strategic interventions to fast track rice productivity growth and for improving overall rice-based agri-food systems in Nepal.

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