

Contribution to the Identification of Elements of Performance of the Agricultural Systems of Production in West Africa: Case of Cotton Farms in the North Benin

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The principal production structures in much of developing country of Africa are often the farms. They were since independences, so not well before, the funding sources of local and nation's economies. The introductions of the cultures whose outputs are strongly required in the countries of North are not indifferent to this question. It is the case of the cotton which was introduced in Benin about the middle of the Fifties. Despite of the role that these farms played in these countries, the needs for increasing the production thus for returned drawn from these speculations, were often not followed identification and control of the elements of performance of the systems of production at the level of agricultural zones. The efforts are generally concentrates on the technological package and the agronomic considerations until the assertion of the environmental considerations and the imposition of the requirements of sustainable development. The agricultural systems of production are not taken any more as the executives of extraction of resources of which the limits should be explored, but rather geo-localised systems whose growth or stagnation rests on the coherence of integrated and interdependent elements. On the basis of this postulate, we estimate that there exists in the operating of agricultural systems in general and that base is cotton, particularly in Benin driving forces whose operation contributes to the growth or the stagnation. Our paper would like to show that the actual position of the externalities of the operation of the farms of Benin depends on a series of elements whose interdependences produce consequences observed. This discussion will rest on the application of an original method of efficiencies estimate, *DEA method (Data Envelopment Analysis)* to a sample of farms whose results are analyzed with the tools of the theory of the regulation. We estimate that it is possible through this analysis to arrive at the identification of the indicators of performances of the local systems of production whose control could allow the socio-economic growth and ecological balance in the areas of production.