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## FARMI's experiences of wealth ranking in the Philippines: different farmers have different needs

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### • Introduction

Farmers of differing wealth will have different problems and needs and varying ability to adopt proposed technologies. Agricultural research and development must take such differences into account to determine research priorities and to develop relevant innovations. In 1990 FARMI/ViSCA started an Upland Agriculture Project in Matalom, Leyte where we wanted to try out wealth ranking. We decided to test this method in three *sitios* of an upland village, San Salvador: Pong-on, Barrack and Cogon.

We had first read about wealth ranking with cards from the RRA Notes and from Grandin's booklet, and so learnt about the three basic steps:

1. preparation: defining key concepts, list of households;
2. card sorting and discussion with informant; and,
3. computing the average and grouping.

### • Preparation

We first obtained a list of households from the *barangay* captain, the political head of the village. This was based on a November 1990 census, showing 37 households in Pong-on, 43 in Barrack and 16 in Cogon. We assumed that there was no need to update the list as the census was recent. However we later encountered problems with the list!

We prepared all the cards (see Figure 1 below) and selected informants for each *sitio*. We had chosen to interview five in each location, starting with the *barangay* official. We asked

the official to nominate the other 4 using these criteria:

- knowledge about the *sitio* residents;
- a mix of rich, average, poor households; and,
- a gender mix.

Figure 1. Preparing the cards

for  
researchers  
use

KI no.	1	2	3	4	5
Pile/ Category					

household  
head  
nick-  
name  
cards

NAZARIO GILO  
"SARIO"

Before starting with the interviews we discussed what term in the local dialect could be used for 'wealth ranking'. We chose *Pagbana-bana sa kahimtang*, which means 'estimates of economic status'. This term turned out to be relevant and familiar for all the informants. We contacted the informants, explain the objective of the exercise and made appointments to meet with them.

### • Card sorting by informants

Each of the informants sorted the cards into 3 to 5 piles indicating the different wealth groups. After they had finished, we asked them to review the piles and make any changes they wanted. We noticed that this was important because they in fact did make changes, transferring cards from one pile to another. In some cases the actual number of

piles was reduced or increased after the review.

After the review the informant were asked to give principal features of each household's livelihood. These were crop production, animal production, receiving remittances (from family members working elsewhere) and others such as fishing, gathering of *tuba* coconut wine, gathering and selling of firewood, and working as hired labourers. This then led into a discussion about the major differences in wealth between the piles. Table 1 is an example from *sitio* Barrack, showing the four groups and how they are different.

### • **Lessons learnt and recommendations**

We found the ranking exercise quick and simple. While producing very valuable results, the interview was very enjoyable. With about 50 households per *sitio*, each informant completed a ranking in about half an hour.

Our first mistake was assuming the official list was accurate. In fact, we discovered our mistake as we were verifying the validity of the results of Table 1. After selecting a few households per category to check, we wanted to make sure that these selected households are physically located throughout the *sitio*. Therefore, a spot map had to be prepared first, with the help of the residents. We found that the map included a few households not found on the list we had used. There was also some confusion about whether a certain household belonged to this *sitio* or another because they were adjacent. We recommend that you make

sure a list of households is complete and accurate before starting the interviews.

Other lessons we found important include:

- Ask if someone is commonly known by a nickname. We found that many of the informants knew the other residents by their nicknames rather than by their formal name;
- We found some households were ranked completely differently by different informants, e.g. richest by one and poorest by another. It is important that you check this, probing about that household, instead of relying on the final average score;
- Although it is important that the informant can do the ranking without too much interference, we found that family members can facilitate the process;
- As there are so many local dialects, it is good to discuss the appropriate local term thoroughly with each of the informants; and,
- We found that the informants who were in the middle/last categories felt quite comfortable about ranking themselves.

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**Table 1. Major indicators of wealth sampling among households in sitio Barrack**

<b>Pil e/C at.</b>	<b>House hold no.</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
I	43, 42, 38, 36, 34, 28, 41, 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mostly landowners</li> <li>– Some houses are made of permanent materials</li> <li>– Own more number of livestock (cows, carabaos, pigs and chicken)</li> <li>– Mostly receiving remittances from children working either in Manila or abroad</li> </ul>
II	39, 37, 27, 22, 20, 19, 17, 33, 21, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mostly either tenants or tenants at same time land owners of small land parcels</li> <li>– Mostly own a number of livestock (cows, carabaos, pigs, chicken)</li> <li>– Mostly receiving remittances from children working in Manila</li> </ul>
III	40, 31, 26, 25, 23, 16, 7, 4, 2, 30, 24, 15, 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tenants of small land parcels</li> <li>– Hired laborers</li> <li>– Majority don't have carabao and other livestock</li> <li>– Old folks dependent upon children's support</li> </ul>
IV	32, 29, 13, 12, 10, 9, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Majority are not cultivating any land parcels</li> <li>– No carabao (as draft animal)</li> <li>– Dependent mostly on any of the following sources of income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing (small scale)</li> <li>• Tuba gathering (small scale)</li> <li>• Gathering and selling firewood/charcoal</li> <li>• Hired labor/maids</li> </ul> </li> </ul>