

## **Transitioning from traditional to modern farming: narratives of rice farmers of Norala, South Cotabato**

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**Abstract:** This study explores the experiences of agricultural farmers in Norala, South Cotabato, as they transition from traditional to modern farming practices. Using a qualitative narrative approach, the research delves into the personal stories, challenges, and opportunities faced by farmers during this shift. The participants of the study were agricultural farmers from Norala, South Cotabato, who have undergone or are currently experiencing the shift from traditional to modern farming practices. A purposive sampling technique was used to select individuals with rich experiences and insights relevant to the research topic. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews to allow participants to share their stories openly while addressing key research objectives. The interviews focused on understanding the farmers' challenges, motivations, adaptations, and perceptions regarding the transition process. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and insights across the participants' narratives. The transition to modern farming in Norala has profoundly transformed the agricultural community, enhancing efficiency, productivity, and resilience through the adoption of advanced technologies and sustainable practices. Modern machinery such as tractors, rice seeders, and harvesters has reduced physical labor and increased crop yields, while diversification into supplementary income activities like small businesses and asset investments has bolstered financial stability. Collaborative efforts among farmers, local governments, and agricultural organizations have bridged knowledge and resource gaps, promoting innovation and sustainable practices that address challenges like rising input costs and unpredictable weather. These changes have improved the economic, social, and personal well-being of farmers, enabling balanced lifestyles, strengthened community ties, and greater resilience against risks. By combining modern techniques with strategies, Norala's farming community has achieved long-term sustainability and prosperity, setting a model for adaptive and innovative agricultural development.

Keywords: traditional farming, modern farming, agricultural transition, farmer narratives, norala, south Cotabato

Date Submitted: May 18, 2025

Date Accepted: May 30, 2025

Date Published: June 14, 2025

## INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector has seen substantial changes over the past few decades, with many farmers moving away from traditional methods toward more modern farming practices. This shift has been influenced by several factors, including technological advancements, shifts in environmental conditions, and the growing need for more efficient and sustainable agricultural approaches. Traditional farming, typically marked by low-tech and labor-intensive techniques, was gradually being replaced by modern methods that utilize mechanization, improved seed varieties, and chemical inputs. However, the adoption of these new practices was not always straightforward and varies depending on the context. Farmers often face challenges such as financial limitations, lack of knowledge, and resistance to change. The stories of farmers who have experienced this transformation provide valuable insights into the socio-economic, cultural, and psychological aspects of this transition. By delving into these personal accounts, this study aims to illuminate the hurdles and opportunities faced by farmers as they shift from traditional to modern farming. Understanding these experiences is crucial for shaping policies and interventions that can support farmers during this critical phase of agricultural development (Smith, 2019). The introduction of harvesters has also played a transformative role, with tractors and modern harvesting equipment dramatically improving productivity and reducing the reliance on labor-intensive methods (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

The agricultural sector in the Philippines was at the moment undergoing a remarkable and significant change, as it shifts away from traditional farming methods that are deeply rooted in indigenous practices that have been utilized for generations. This change towards modernity was characterized by adopting technology-driven approaches that involve advanced techniques and innovations into farming.

The impetus behind this notable transition was largely motivated by the pressing need to effectively address various challenges that the sector is facing, including issues such as low productivity levels, the impacts of climate change, and the rising demand for food that is a direct result of ongoing population growth in the region (Briones, 2021).

Traditionally, farming in the Philippines has been characterized by a dependence on manual labor, incorporation of organic inputs, and utilization of agricultural techniques passed on for generations. Indeed, these traditional practices seem sustainable because they rely entirely on the local knowledge for many years and with available resources within the locality to effectively grow crops as necessary such as rice, corn and other vegetables. Indeed, however despite the said advantages, traditional farming methods incur limitations that affect their efficient utilization. Such limitations can include pronounced vulnerability to diseases and pests, which tend to destroy crops. These consistently low yields do not compare with the expectations of any modern production, and inefficiencies particularly in fulfilling the need of larger market requirements, as was often the case when considering traditional farming practices (Maghirang et al., 2019).

Modern farming practices can be defined as a vast array of innovative techniques to deal with the numerous issues facing the agricultural sector currently, including mechanization and precision agriculture, strategic implementation of hybrid seeds, and other chemical inputs. For instance, the introduction and deployment of mechanized equipment, from essential tools such as tractors and harvesters, have made it possible to significantly reduce not only labor costs but the time required for most operations, while the use of advanced irrigation systems

and fertilizer application has greatly increased yield in crops, thus leading to the production of more food efficiently. The government has implemented various initiatives to enhance agricultural practices, one notable example being the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF). This specific fund is designed to provide substantial support to farmers, enabling them to adopt advanced technologies crucial for improving their overall productivity and ensuring greater sustainability in their farming practices (Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2021).

The town of Norala, often called the "Rice Bowl" or "Rice Granary" of South Cotabato, was a central rice-producing area in the southern region of the Philippines. It is also known for cattle farming, large rice mills, and various post-harvest facilities. This study examines the transition from traditional to modern farming in Norala, South Cotabato, focusing on the challenges local farmers face. It explores the difficulties they encounter, the strategies they use to adapt to modernization, and the impact of this shift on their personal, social, and economic well-being.

### *Problem Statement*

The primary objective of this study is to present the transitioning from traditional to modern farming of the farmers of Norala, South Cotabato. This research addresses the following questions:

1. What is the current status of modern farming in Norala, South Cotabato?
2. What are the factors that induced the agricultural farmers of Norala, South Cotabato to shift from traditional to modern farming?
3. What are the problems and challenges that the agricultural farmers encountered in transitioning from traditional to modern farming?
4. What coping strategies do the agricultural farmers adopt in response to the challenges posed by modernization?
5. How does the shift from traditional to modern farming impact the personal, social, and economic well-being of the agricultural farmers?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research design*

This study employed a qualitative narrative research design. Narratology or narrative research is a design in which the researcher inquires into the lives of individuals and asks them to tell stories or accounts about their lives (Riessman, 2008; Creswell, 2014). The use of a qualitative narrative research design is particularly suited for exploring the transition from traditional to modern farming because it allows the researcher to delve deeply into the personal stories and experiences of farmers in Norala, South Cotabato. By gathering and analyzing these narratives, the study seeks to understand the farmers' perspectives, challenges, and reflections on this significant shift in agricultural practices. This approach recognizes the human complexity of this transition and provides a means to authentically capture the richness of their lived experiences.

### *Locale of Study*

The research locale of this study is Norala which is a third-class municipality in South Cotabato, located in the region of Soccsksargen, Philippines. It was officially established in 1953 through Executive Order No. 572 signed by President Elpidio Quirino. Norala is composed of 14 barangays, including areas such as Poblacion, San Miguel, and Liberty. As of the 2020 census, the population of Norala stands at approximately 46,682 people.

### *Respondents of the study*

Farmers who shift from traditional to modern farming for at least 2 years.

### *Selection and Description of Respondents*

The researcher adopted a purposive sampling design, where the researcher selects participants based on specific characteristics or criteria relevant to the research question. The goal is to intentionally pick subjects who have knowledge, experience, or traits that are particularly informative for the study.

### *Data Gathering Instruments*

This study used a semi-structured guide questions. A semi-structured research instrument is a flexible and dynamic data collection tool that combines predetermined questions with open-ended inquiries, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration of the subject. The instrument was consist of a set of predefined questions, ensuring consistency in data collection, along with open-ended questions to allow participants to share their unique perspectives and narratives. The use of a semi-structured instrument aligned with the qualitative nature of the study, offering a balance between structure and flexibility to capture the richness of the participants' stories.

### *Data Gathering Procedure*

The researcher first conducted an ocular visit to various barangays in my town with a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 6 hectares of rice fields. Next, letters were sent to the offices and individuals who can provide adequate information to the study. Furthermore, after providing a consent letter to the participants, a one-on-one interview was done to the farmers who experienced Transitioning from Traditional to Modern Farming with the use of the guide questions.

In the conduct of interviews, I first established rapport with the participants to make sure that the latter was feel confident and comfortable. Establishing an atmosphere of trust is important so that the participants were be able think and speak freely without doubt and hesitation. Moreover, factual questions were ask first, to be followed by probing questions. Follow-up questions were ask during the interview to ensure the richness and depth of the data.

More so, some information was taken from other research materials such as books, articles, journals, magazines, and other related studies. The collected data was undergo thorough analysis and scrutiny to ensure its accuracy and significance. This information are presented through narrative analysis.

### *Data Analysis Procedure*

The research methodology involves a rigorous and thorough examination of data collected from both documentary and interview sources. The texts obtained was undergo repeated readings to ensure a deep and comprehensive understanding. This iterative process helps to identify and extract information directly relevant to the research objectives, particularly focusing on the experiences of farmers transitioning from traditional to modern farming practices.

Allen (2017) and Creswell (2014) present complementary approaches to narrative and thematic analysis in qualitative research. Allen underscores the dynamic and contextual aspects of narratives, emphasizing their chronological progression, the impact of cultural and social influences, and the intricate themes revealed through iterative analysis. This perspective captures the interconnected and nuanced views of participants. Conversely, Creswell offers a more

structured methodology, highlighting techniques such as restorying, systematic coding, and validating themes through strategies like triangulation and member checking. His approach ensures clarity and consistency, using visual representations and narrative summaries to effectively convey findings. Together, these methods combine depth and precision, enabling researchers to derive rich, contextually informed insights while ensuring analytical rigor.

The narratives provided by participants serve as detailed explorations of the principles, procedures, and practices underpinning this transition. By employing both content analysis and narrative analysis, the study aims to uncover patterns, themes, and insights within the stories shared by farmers. Content analysis is systematically evaluate the frequency and context of key ideas, while narrative analysis focuses on the structure and meaning of the stories to highlight the farmers' experiences and perspectives.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### *Current status of modern farming*

As of early 2025, the municipality of Norala in South Cotabato illustrates a significant shift in Philippine agriculture, marked by the adoption of modern farming technologies, livelihood assistance programs, and a strong pursuit of financial independence among farmers. This transition aligns with the national agenda led by the Department of Agriculture (DA), which promotes technology-driven agricultural practices to enhance productivity, ensure food security, and attract younger generations to farming. Farmers in Norala have embraced tools such as tractors, harvesters, and rice seeders, which have dramatically improved the efficiency and ease of farming operations. These machines have reduced manual labor, allowed quicker turnaround times for planting and harvesting, and helped mitigate challenges brought about by unpredictable weather. The integration of such technology has not only modernized traditional farming methods but also contributed to increased yields and more effective farm management.

Government support has played a crucial role in facilitating this transformation. Through various livelihood assistance programs, the government and other institutions have provided training on how to use modern machinery, offered financial loans for equipment acquisition, and extended support in times of crisis such as crop damage due to severe weather. The Department of Agriculture's efforts—such as the distribution of rice seeds, fertilizers, and cash aid—have empowered farmers to maintain stability, reduce production costs, and continue farming even during challenging periods. These interventions align with broader studies emphasizing the impact of livelihood programs in improving agricultural productivity and the socio-economic well-being of rural communities.

In addition to technological advancements and government support, farmers in Norala have demonstrated a clear focus on achieving financial independence. Many have used the profits from successful harvests to invest in land, improve their homes, and finance their children's education, resulting in long-term family prosperity. Others have diversified their income sources by starting small businesses, such as rice retailing, highlighting their entrepreneurial spirit and proactive financial planning. These strategies have not only strengthened their economic stability but also reduced vulnerability to agricultural risks, echoing research that underscores the importance of income diversification in achieving financial resilience.

Altogether, the current status of modern farming in Norala paints a promising picture of rural development. The synergy of modern technology, institutional support, and forward-looking financial strategies has empowered farmers to improve their productivity, enhance their quality of

life, and secure a more sustainable future. Norala serves as a model for how rural communities can adapt to change, embrace innovation, and thrive in a rapidly evolving agricultural landscape.

*Factors that induced the agricultural farmers to shift from traditional to modern farming*

The shift from traditional to modern farming in Norala, South Cotabato is the result of various interconnected factors that have collectively encouraged agricultural farmers to embrace new technologies and methods. These factors are shaped by both environmental pressures and social dynamics, leading to the gradual transformation of farming practices in the region. Among the most prominent drivers are climate change and unpredictable weather conditions, the influence of neighboring farmers, and the substantial increase in productivity brought about by mechanization.

Climate change has posed serious challenges for farmers in Norala, as erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged droughts, and sudden downpours make it increasingly difficult to follow predictable planting and harvesting cycles. Farmers shared that the frequent and unexpected weather shifts have significantly affected their productivity, pushing them to adopt modern machinery such as harvesters and tractors. These technologies allow for faster completion of farming tasks, enabling them to harvest crops more efficiently and avoid losses due to adverse weather. The adoption of such machinery has become a crucial adaptation strategy, helping mitigate the risks posed by climate instability. This aligns with findings from the World Food Programme and recent reports documenting the devastating effects of El Niño on agricultural output in vulnerable regions like Mindanao and the Visayas.

Another important factor influencing the shift is the strong social influence of neighboring farmers. In Norala, farming is not just an individual endeavor but a communal one, where knowledge and practices are widely shared. Farmers often learn about modern techniques, new machinery, and effective planting strategies from neighbors and friends who have already adopted such practices. This informal but powerful exchange of information accelerates the spread of innovation. Testimonies reveal that conversations and shared experiences have motivated many to try hybrid seeds, fertilizers, and modern equipment, resulting in more efficient and productive farming. This network of peer influence fosters collaboration and community-driven development, consistent with the observations of scholars who highlight the role of farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange in driving agricultural modernization.

Perhaps the most compelling reason for the transition to modern farming is the marked increase in productivity. Farmers consistently reported that the use of mechanized tools—particularly tractors and harvesters—has drastically reduced the time and labor required for fieldwork. Tasks that once took days can now be completed in a matter of hours, allowing farmers to manage larger areas and focus on improving other aspects of their operations. The efficiency and ease provided by machinery not only boost yields but also lessen the physical burden on farmers. This transformation enhances the sustainability and profitability of farming, equipping farmers with the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly demanding agricultural landscape. As noted in relevant literature, the integration of modern machinery and high-yield crop varieties has revolutionized agriculture by increasing resilience, efficiency, and food security.

In conclusion, the transition from traditional to modern farming in Norala is driven by a combination of necessity and opportunity. Climate change and unpredictable weather patterns have forced farmers to seek more efficient and reliable methods. The influence of neighboring farmers has facilitated the rapid adoption of innovations, while the evident gains in productivity have validated the shift to mechanization. Together, these factors reflect a broader cultural and technological evolution in Norala's agricultural sector. The integration of modern tools, supported

by a collaborative farming community, positions Norala's farmers to be more adaptable, resilient, and competitive in the face of environmental and economic challenges.

*Problems and challenges that the agricultural farmers encountered in transitioning from traditional to modern farming.*

Farming in Norala, South Cotabato, has undergone a significant transformation in recent years, with many farmers shifting from traditional methods to modern, technology-driven agricultural practices. This transition has brought notable benefits, including increased productivity, operational efficiency, and improved resilience to environmental challenges. However, despite these advancements, farmers continue to face substantial obstacles that hinder the full adoption and success of modern farming. These challenges include financial constraints, lack of technical knowledge, and soil degradation—each posing unique yet interconnected difficulties in sustaining agricultural progress.

One of the most persistent challenges farmers in Norala face is financial constraint. As a municipality known for its agricultural heritage, Norala's economy heavily relies on farming, yet the costs associated with modern agricultural inputs—such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and machinery—are prohibitively high for many. Farmers shared that although investing in new technologies can yield greater harvests, the upfront expenses often create a barrier to adoption. Some farmers turn to cooperatives, banks, or financial assistance from the Department of Agriculture (DA) to offset these costs. Nonetheless, the high cost of farming inputs continues to strain budgets and limit the ability to scale operations. This financial burden not only affects their capacity to invest in tools and equipment but also impedes diversification efforts, such as branching out into livestock or other income-generating ventures. Studies have shown that limited financial resources increase farmers' vulnerability to crop failure and market volatility, making improved access to credit and financial education critical for long-term sustainability.

Compounding these financial challenges is the lack of technical knowledge among farmers, particularly when it comes to operating modern machinery or applying advanced agricultural methods. The transition from traditional to mechanized farming is not only costly but also intellectually demanding, especially for farmers who have long relied on generational knowledge and manual techniques. Many initially hesitated to use new equipment like tractors, harvesters, and rice seeders due to unfamiliarity and fear of improper usage. However, government-led initiatives such as seminars and hands-on training programs have played a key role in bridging this knowledge gap. Participants noted that these trainings helped them understand the practical benefits and correct use of modern technologies, ultimately enabling more confident and effective adoption. Building technical capacity through education and collaboration between local government units and agricultural organizations is essential to fostering a culture of innovation, continuous learning, and adaptability within the farming community.

Another pressing issue confronting farmers in Norala is soil degradation. Despite embracing modern technologies and chemical inputs to increase yields, farmers have begun to observe the negative impacts of excessive pesticide and fertilizer use on soil health. Over time, these practices deplete essential nutrients and degrade soil structure, reducing its capacity to support healthy crop growth. Participants expressed concern about declining soil fertility and shared that persistent chemical use compromises the long-term viability of their land. In response, many have adopted sustainable practices like crop rotation to mitigate the effects of degradation. By rotating crops, farmers can help restore soil nutrients and maintain a balance that supports ongoing agricultural

productivity. This method not only aids in preserving soil quality but also enhances resistance to pests and diseases. Soil degradation, if left unaddressed, threatens not only the environment but also food security and the broader agricultural economy. As research suggests, sustainable land management strategies—including conservation tillage and reforestation—are necessary to reverse this trend and safeguard ecosystems.

In summary, while farming in Norala has made commendable strides toward modernization, it is evident that the path to sustainable and resilient agriculture is still fraught with challenges. Financial limitations, lack of technical expertise, and environmental degradation hinder the full realization of modern farming's potential. Nevertheless, farmers remain determined and adaptive, seeking ways to overcome these barriers through education, institutional support, and sustainable practices. With continued investment in training, access to credit, and environmentally conscious farming methods, Norala's agricultural sector holds the promise of long-term growth, food security, and improved livelihoods for its farming communities.

#### *Coping strategies of agricultural farmers in response to the challenges posed by modernization*

The agricultural landscape of Norala, a thriving farming municipality in South Cotabato, has been significantly reshaped by modernization. The introduction of advanced tools, machinery, and new farming techniques has brought both opportunity and challenge to the region's farmers. While these innovations offer increased productivity and efficiency, they also demand new knowledge, resources, and adaptability. In response to these challenges, farmers in Norala have developed practical coping strategies that have enabled them to navigate the transition from traditional to modern agriculture. These strategies include adopting modern technology, accessing government assistance, and participating in training and seminars—all of which collectively contribute to sustaining productivity, improving livelihoods, and ensuring long-term resilience.

One of the most crucial strategies employed by Norala farmers is the adoption of modern technology. Although many were initially hesitant to depart from long-established traditional methods, farmers soon recognized the advantages of mechanized tools such as tractors and harvesters. These machines significantly reduced labor demands and shortened the time needed for tasks like planting and harvesting, thus preventing crop delays and losses, especially in times of unpredictable weather. Through personal experiences and peer influence, farmers became more open to innovation, and many began integrating modern equipment into their operations. According to research, the use of advanced agricultural machinery can improve productivity by up to 40%, enabling farmers to manage larger areas of land more efficiently and sustainably. Moreover, modern technologies also enhance resilience against climate change, with innovations such as pest and disease monitoring tools and weather forecasting systems equipping farmers with critical data to protect their crops.

Complementing their technological adoption is the farmers' strategic use of government assistance. Programs initiated by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and supported by the local government have been instrumental in providing critical resources such as hybrid seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and even financial aid. These forms of support have lightened the economic burden of modernization, making it more feasible for small-scale farmers to invest in necessary upgrades. In addition to material aid, government programs also serve as gateways to further opportunities—such as participation in skills development programs or access to subsidized modern equipment. The result has been a notable improvement in crop yields and farming efficiency. Studies affirm that farmers who benefit from structured government assistance achieve up to 30% higher yields

than those without such support, highlighting the importance of continued investment in agriculture to promote food security and rural development.

Equally vital to the farmers' ability to modernize is their participation in training and seminars. Recognizing the necessity of equipping farmers with the knowledge and confidence to operate new technologies, government agencies have rolled out regular capacity-building sessions. These trainings cover a wide range of topics, including modern equipment usage, pest and disease management, and climate-adaptive farming strategies. Farmers reported that these learning opportunities significantly increased their understanding of modern practices and helped them effectively manage challenges such as crop damage from calamities. They also fostered a greater sense of independence and innovation among farmers, enabling them to adapt to a rapidly changing agricultural environment. Research supports the role of continuous education in improving farming outcomes, noting that well-trained farmers are more likely to adopt sustainable practices, increase productivity, and lower operational costs.

In conclusion, the coping strategies employed by agricultural farmers in Norala reflect a proactive and adaptive approach to the challenges posed by modernization. By adopting modern technology, leveraging government assistance, and investing in knowledge through training, these farmers are not only improving their productivity but also strengthening their capacity to sustain agriculture in the long term. The collaborative efforts between farmers, government agencies, and local cooperatives have created an enabling environment for innovation, resilience, and growth. Norala's experience demonstrates that with the right support systems in place, rural communities can successfully navigate the complexities of modernization and achieve inclusive agricultural development.

*The shift from traditional to modern farming and its impact to Personal, Social, and Economic well-being of the Agricultural Farmers*

The transition from traditional to modern farming in Norala, South Cotabato has profoundly transformed the personal, social, and economic well-being of its agricultural farmers. With the adoption of modern tools, techniques, and government-supported initiatives, farmers have experienced not just improved efficiency in their work but also a more balanced lifestyle, stronger community ties, and greater financial stability.

On a personal level, the integration of modern machinery such as tractors and harvesters has significantly improved farmers' work-life balance. Tasks that once took days now take only a few hours, freeing up time for rest, relaxation, and meaningful moments with their families. Farmers emphasized that this balance is crucial for their physical and mental health, helping them remain focused and energized in their daily routines. The reduced physical strain brought by mechanized farming has also made their work less taxing, contributing to better well-being and allowing older farmers or those with large plots of land to manage their farms more effectively. In addition, acquiring knowledge and undergoing training in modern agriculture has further enhanced personal satisfaction. With the support of the Department of Agriculture (DA), farmers have gained essential skills and confidence to navigate modern farming practices, adapt to unpredictable weather, and recover from crises—thereby reducing stress and promoting resilience.

Socially, the shift to modern farming has strengthened bonds within the farming community. Farmers have come to rely on one another for advice, support, and shared learning experiences. Regular seminars, training programs, and collaborative activities supported by the DA have fostered a sense of unity and cooperation. This collective effort not only improves farming

practices but also builds a strong support system that allows farmers to face challenges together. Family support also emerged as a crucial factor in farmers' social well-being. Many shared stories of how the encouragement and contributions of family members inspired them to persevere and achieve milestones such as sending children to college or acquiring their own farm equipment. Access to timely and accurate farming information has further empowered farmers to make informed decisions, optimize resource use, and adopt innovative methods. The availability of updates on climate trends, market conditions, and technological advancements has enabled farmers to stay competitive and engaged in a constantly evolving agricultural landscape.

Economically, modern farming has provided farmers in Norala with more stable and adequate income. While farming remains their primary source of livelihood, many participants reported diversifying their income by engaging in small businesses such as sari-sari stores, vegetable vending, and livestock raising. These supplementary ventures offer critical financial support during off-seasons and protect families from market uncertainties. Access to modern equipment and inputs such as seeds and fertilizers—many of which are provided or subsidized by the DA—has improved productivity, reduced labor costs, and allowed farmers to scale their operations. Financial stability has enabled them to plan for the future, invest in their farms, and improve their overall quality of life.

Furthermore, the importance of risk management and insurance was consistently highlighted by the participants. Farmers acknowledged the unpredictable nature of weather patterns and the ever-present threat of pest infestations, both of which can severely impact crop yields. Crop diversification, climate-resilient practices, and the use of modern technology have helped mitigate these risks. Additionally, insurance programs from the government provide crucial financial protection during calamities, allowing farmers to recover from losses and continue farming operations with less stress. These strategies—combined with access to government support, modern tools, and financial resources—have empowered Norala's farmers to adapt to change, remain productive, and achieve long-term economic success.

In summary, the shift from traditional to modern farming in Norala has led to significant improvements in farmers' quality of life. Personally, they enjoy better health, more family time, and greater confidence. Socially, they are part of a more connected and supportive farming community. Economically, they benefit from more stable incomes, improved efficiency, and reduced risks. Through collaboration, innovation, and continued government support, Norala's agricultural sector is not only sustaining itself but thriving—ensuring a brighter and more resilient future for its farmers and their families.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the study's findings, the transition from traditional to modern farming in Norala, South Cotabato, has brought transformative changes that significantly enhanced the lives and livelihoods of agricultural farmers. The integration of modern farming technologies has markedly improved efficiency and productivity while addressing persistent challenges such as unpredictable weather patterns. Alongside these innovations, farmers have adopted strong financial strategies and diversified their income sources, contributing to greater economic stability and an improved quality of life. These developments affirm the critical role of modernization in fostering long-term resilience, sustainability, and prosperity within the farming community.

The shift to modern farming in Norala has been largely driven by the adoption of advanced technologies that reduce physical labor, minimize risk, and streamline farm operations. This

transformation has been reinforced by a strong spirit of collaboration among farmers, who share knowledge, practices, and access to modern tools. Such cooperation has accelerated agricultural progress, enabling the farming community to thrive in an ever-changing agricultural landscape. Despite the promising outcomes, farmers have faced challenges in transitioning to modern practices, particularly due to the high cost of farming inputs. Nevertheless, their determination to invest in their farms and embrace change has driven substantial progress. Educational initiatives and partnerships between local government units and agricultural organizations have played a pivotal role in addressing financial and technical gaps. These collaborative efforts, along with practices like crop rotation and sustainable resource use, have significantly improved productivity while reducing operational costs.

Government support, especially from the Department of Agriculture (DA), has been instrumental in supporting this transformation. The provision of seeds, fertilizers, equipment, training, and financial aid has alleviated many of the financial burdens associated with modernization. Farmers' active participation in training programs and their collaboration with cooperatives and agricultural agencies have also helped them build resilience to natural disasters and adapt to evolving agricultural needs. This synergy of innovation, training, and institutional support has ensured the sustained growth of Norala's farming sector.

Overall, the shift to modern farming has positively influenced the personal, social, and economic well-being of Norala's farmers. It has promoted a healthier work-life balance, reduced physical strain through mechanization, and supported sustainable practices. At the same time, community collaboration and access to timely agricultural information have strengthened social cohesion and increased farmers' capacity to confront shared challenges. With the combined benefits of technological innovation, diversified income strategies, government support, and strong community ties, Norala's farming community is well-positioned for continued success and long-term resilience in the agricultural sector.

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