Factors Influencing Decline of Coffee Production in Kirinyaga County

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Abstract

Coffee is one of the most important cash crops in the country and is a major source of foreign income. Despite the increasing trend of coffee prices since 2002, production in Kirinyaga East sub-county has remained low. This has negatively impacted on the farmers' income from the enterprise thus affecting their livelihood due to poor income. This study aimed at investigating the factors influencing decline of coffee production in Kirinyaga east sub-county and the necessary interventions to alleviate the problem. A total of 65 farmers were selected from the study area using a stratified random technique and structured questionnaire used to collect data. The selection of farmers was done by dividing the entire population in to stratums. The three agro ecological zones suitable for coffee farming represented the stratums. Three cooperative societies cutting across the three zones were then selected and 13 wet mills further selected to represent the stratums. Finally, farm households were randomly selected from each of the selected factories. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression and presented in form of tables, graphs and charts. The results indicated that majority of the farmers, 32.3% fel under the age cluster of between 51-60 years. Out of the 80% who required credit, only 47.9 had access. This lack of credit negatively influences production. The study also revealed that only 16.9% of farmers were aware of commodity funf despite its existence for the last eleven years. The varibles which were statisticaly significant were the total number of coffee trees, income from other sources and failure to consult extension agents. Agricultural based policies should thus focus on ensuring that farmers have adequate access to credit and improved extension services. On the other hand, farmers should ensure diversification of income as well as increasing the number of coffee tree.