

Market participation by vegetable farmers in Kenya: A comparison of rural and peri-urban areas

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Abstract

Transformations in agri-food systems provide prospects for improving livelihoods of many farmers through enhanced participation in commercial agriculture. Indeed, various studies have been undertaken to establish factors that influence the level of market orientation in different areas. However, those studies do not show appropriate objective criteria to support decisions for either separating or merging data and the subsequent analyses for different sites. Consequently, policy inferences made from such studies may be misleading due to failure to statistically account for site-specific variations in data. This study fills the analytical gap evident in literature by using the Chow test and descriptive measures of statistical difference to compare the intensity of market participation among rural and periurban vegetable farmers in Kenya. Results show that there are significant differences in the percentage of output sold, distance from farm to market, and the unit price of sale for output between the Rural and Peri-Urban areas. These findings demonstrate the urgent need for appropriate statistical evidence to improve disaggregated analyses of agricultural market participation in different systems and environments. This would enable targeting of development strategies to effectively address the changing agricultural landscape; particularly enhancing food supply and ensuring better farm incomes. There is need to improve market information provision, develop farmers' business skills, improve roads and or support establishment of high value vegetable market outlets at different scales in Rural and Peri-Urban areas.