

ABSTRACT

This study focused on certain socio-economic and institutional factors influencing the uptake and adoption of herbaceous legumes among small holder dairy farmers in Kandara Division, Maragua District. These factors included the level of education and membership in social groups, on the one hand, and access to information and market for milk, on the other. The study was conducted in order to fill a gap information concerning the influence of socioeconomic and institutional factors that influence adoption of herbaceous legumes by small holder dairy farmers in Kandara Division. The study was conducted between February and May 2002. The study sought answers to the following questions: To what extent does the level of education influence the uptake and adoption of herbaceous legumes in Kandara Division? To what extent does being a member of a farmers' group influence the farmers' adoption behaviour? How do farmers access agricultural information and what is its influence on uptake and adoption? Finally, how does access to markets for milk influence uptake and adoption of herbaceous legumes? The general objective of the study was to investigate the influence of certain socio-economic and institutional factors on the uptake and adoption of herbaceous legumes in Kandara Division, Maragua District. The specific objectives were: to evaluate the extent to which the level of education influences the uptake and adoption of herbaceous legumes in Kandara Division; to investigate the extent to which being a member of a farmers' group influences the farmer's adoption behaviour; to investigate farmers' access to information and its influence on uptake and adoption; and to investigate the effect of market access for milk on uptake and adoption of herbaceous legumes. The study population consisted of all the small holder farmers in Kandara Division while the unit of analysis was the household. Household heads (males and females) acted as respondents. Interviewing was the main method used to collect information. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain quantitative data. The data was presented in frequencies and percentages. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews were also held. Direct observation of farms was made for evidence of uptake and adoption. The data obtained was analysed qualitatively by looking for emerging themes. The study found that first, the level of education negatively co-vary with uptake of herbaceous legumes. Second, membership in social groups and, by extension, sharing of agricultural information, does not influence the uptake and adoption of herbaceous legumes. Third, farmers' access to agricultural information is inadequate, and thus does not contribute to uptake and adoption. Finally, both milk prices and the kind of market outlet used influence uptake and adoption of herbaceous legumes. Milk prices are generally a disincentive. Individual consumers and hotels positively influence uptake by offering relatively higher and stable prices. The private traders influence adoption positively by being reliable. On the basis of these findings, the following recommendations are made. 1. The agricultural extension policy on delivery of extension services should be revised to reflect restructuring implemented recently by the government. The new policy should envisage the notion of multiple providers such as NGOs, farmer groups, CBOs, church groups, etc., in both delivery and financing of extension services. 2. The radio is the farmers' most accessible channel of communication. Thus, the scope of information transmitted should be expanded to cover all aspects of agriculture, including the production of herbaceous legumes. KCC will continue to play a major role in milk marketing because of its capacity to handle more milk than other processors and countrywide coverage. Its efficiency should, therefore, be enhanced by reverting its ownership to farmers.