

# Challenges and Opportunities in Cassava Production among the Rural Households in Kilifi County in the Coastal Region of Kenya

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## Abstract

In Kenya, food security and poverty alleviation are some of the most important factors that the country must address in order to achieve the vision 2030. Cassava has potential not only as food for humans, but also as feed for livestock and as a substrate for biofuel production. Although various constraints have been reported to afflict farmers in cassava production, a base line survey in the study sites (Kilifi and Kaloleni) was necessary to identify specific constraints facing farmers in this region so as to identify areas of intervention in production and utilization. Lack of disease free planting materials was identified as one of the major constraints since cassava mosaic disease (CMD) and the cassava brown streak disease (CBSD) pose serious threats in yield losses. The two diseases are transmitted by vectors and by diseased planting materials and almost all the farmers obtain their planting materials from their neighbours thus aiding in disease dissemination and compounding the problem. There is need to enable the community produce quality cassava seed and operate sustained cassava business, integrate legumes into cassava cropping systems and create an innovative value addition chain for utilization of cassava. Eighty percent of Kenya is marginal area and cassava being drought tolerant can enable the potential of these areas to be tapped thus helping to deal with the persistent food insecurity which is a common feature in these areas.

**Key words:** Cassava, cowpeas, cultivars, production constraints, utilization