

The last two decades have witnessed many developing countries diversify exports into non traditional fresh exports (NTFE), especially fresh fruits and vegetable. The diversification has been driven by globalization and changing consumer lifestyle among others. The NTFE are grown mainly by smallholder farmers in developing countries. As the trade with developing countries has expanded, so have been the demands for compliance with very stringent food safety standards. What has been the effect of these standards on smallholder farmer participation in the NTFE value chain? Where in the value chain are smallholder farmers most affected? And how have such farmers adjusted to these effects? This study uses green bean value chains in three African countries to address these questions. It identifies six critical points at which smallholder farmers face the greatest risk of being marginalized by the standards and the strategies used by farmers to respond these threats in order to maintain their participation in the high-end export markets. Of the six critical control points, smallholders farmers are most threatened with exclusion from green bean value chain at the pre-harvest farm-level and collection centre control points. Farmers have had to use two non-market strategies namely, collective action and public-private partnerships to avoid being marginalized at these points of the value chain. These findings imply that the market, if left on its own, could adopt solutions that exclude smallholder farmers from NTFE value chain.