

Assessing the Effects of Information and Communication on the use of Organic Resource Inputs to Build Soil Fertility in the Central Highlands of Kenya

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Abstract

This study sought to assess the effects of information and communication on the use of organic resource inputs in the Central Highlands of Kenya. To achieve this purpose, the study set out to identify the available sources of information and innovations on organic resources by farmers, determine whether farmers' socio-economic status influence communication processes and information access regarding the adoption of the inputs, investigate the effects of community groups and associations on the communication and adoption of these inputs, and assess the effects of communication on their uptake. The study used phenomenology qualitative research and participatory research designs. Two sub-counties from two different counties in the region were purposively selected. Stratified random sampling was then used to select two villages from each sub-county. Thirty farmers, 15 from each sub-county, were randomly selected as respondents of the study. Interview schedules and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools were used to collect data. The collected data were analysed qualitatively. The key findings of the study revealed that information and communication have significantly improved farmers' knowledge on animal manure, organic and inorganic fertilisers and crop rotation and scaled up the use of animal manure, organic and inorganic fertilisers, and crop rotation by farmers. Additionally, the study established that farmer's age, income, education level and gender influence information access of organic resource inputs and their subsequent uptake. The study also found out that government extension staff and vernacular radio are the most available and preferred sources of organic resource inputs by farmers. The study recommends that researchers should consider how extension agents can be made more useful in dissemination of information about organic resource inputs since they are one of the main sources of this kind of information.