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## Achieving Food and Nutritional Security through Commercialised Agriculture: The Role of Transitional Systems in Kenya

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### Abstract

Agricultural commercialisation has the potential of increasing access to diversified foods among households. Increased purchasing power due to market participation enables consumers to afford more nutritious food bundles. However, there is scanty empirical literature on the extent and patterns of agricultural commercialisation in remote rural food-insecure farm-households in Africa. This study provides evidence of how emerging transitions in rural infrastructure and devolved governance systems contribute to market participation by farm-households, which ultimately leads to nutritional diversity in western Kenya.

Primary household survey data from a random sample of 300 smallholder maize farmers was analysed using; descriptive analysis and multiple linear regression. Results showed that, amount of purchased inputs used, household asset index, land size, total output, access to credit and trust in traders significantly influenced commercialisation patterns in transitional systems (with declining land sizes, increased market access). Further, it was noted that support services (inputs, wealth, and credit) had both positive and negative effects on the level of commercialisation in transitional systems. Areas with improved infrastructure especially improved access to all weather roads, had better access to marketed inputs and thus reported considerable increments in the amount of maize sold compared to areas with poor infrastructure. Intuitively, households with high exposure to positive transitions in infrastructure, land management systems and better inclusive localised governance systems for land and support services had higher levels of market participation which ultimately contributed to improved food and nutrition security. The study recommends the need for both County and National government to invest in infrastructure so as to increase commercialisation. More specifically, high access to all weather roads positively contributes to market participation among farmers.

**Keywords:** Commercialisation, food and nutrition security, Kenya, transitions