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Management Constraints of Cocoa Agroforest During Acquisition and Application of Pesticides in Humid Forest Zone of Cameroon

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Abstract

Subsidies on pesticides (by purchasing, distributing, and applying) for many years allowed farmers in the humid forest zone of Southern Cameroon to maintain cocoa production at a reasonable level. In such conditions, cocoa allowed some 400,000 households to achieve basic needs such as food, health, scolarisation, wedding expenses, building houses, etc. . . The economic liberalisation in the early 1990s affected the cocoa and pesticides sectors by the withdrawing of the state in favour of the private sector and the farmers. This withdrawing led to some changes in farmer behaviour. This new behaviour needs to be studied to better help farmers in the management of their farms. This paper focuses on constraints faced by farmers when acquiring and applying pesticides in cocoa agroforest in humid forest zone of southern Cameroon.

More than half of cocoa farmers use chemical pesticides. High cost and the lack of products are the main constraints faced respectively by 65 and 55 % of cocoa farmers using pesticides. These two constraints are the mains reasons given by 26 and 43 % of farmers who do not use pesticides. Among cocoa farmers, 21 % buy their pesticides in the villages while 20 % acquire them in town. Fungicides are the most used pesticides. But the frequency of their application is below standard. The low application of pesticides led to the decrease in cocoa production. To avoid this reduction, among the changes, farmers are now organising themselves in group to acquire and apply pesticides and developing, from local botanical knowledge and pest management strategies, mixture compositions of chemical pesticides and biopesticides (from plant extracts).

In the new context of liberalisation of the cocoa and pesticides sector, it is necessary to better diffuse good practices related to acquisition, storing, manipulation and application of pesticides in view of promoting integrated pest management in southern Cameroon.

Keywords: Cocoa agroforest, economics liberalisation, management of cocoa, pesticides, Southern Cameroon