



Tropentag, October 9-11, 2007, Witzenhausen

“Utilisation of diversity in land use systems:  
Sustainable and organic approaches to meet human needs”

## Effect of Agricultural Commercialisation on Selected Agrobiodiversity and Household Income: A Case Study of Smallholder Households, Nakuru, Kenya

ERIC BETT<sup>1</sup>, BERNHARD FREYER<sup>1</sup>, JOB LAGAT<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU), Inst. of Organic Farming, Austria*

<sup>2</sup>*Egerton University, Department of Agricultural Economics, Kenya*

### Abstract

The Kenya government strategy for revitalizing agriculture (SRA; 2004–2014) presents strategic interventions to transform agriculture into a competitive and market-oriented enterprise. This strategy of commercialising agriculture is aimed at eradicating food insecurity and poverty at household level. However, it has been envisaged to negate efforts concerning conservation of agrobiodiversity and pose a greater threat to household food insecurity. There is therefore a need to find out the effect of commercialisation of on-farm agrobiodiversity. The research question was whether it is possible to meet the strategic objectives of SRA without compromising agrobiodiversity especially among smallholder farming community in Kenya. The paper first discusses aspects of the policy of promoting market-oriented production as opposed to conventional subsistence and diversified systems.

Secondly, it presents analytical results from intensive farmer interviews and finally draw conclusions and policy implications. This is an issue that warrants investigation to establish a reality of policy's effects on agrobiodiversity and household income and consequently food security. The study was carried out in the East Mau catchment, Nakuru district, in Rift valley, Kenya, an area that has recently undergone rapid land use changes.

The selected effect components of the study were number of crop/animal species kept for agrobiodiversity, proportion of marketed output for commercialisation and on-farm cash income per annum. Results reveal that market-oriented production increases income and crop diversity at household level. The study recommends diversification of commercial crops, livestock and popularising farm enterprise with products that can be utilised locally rather than depending on external market for food security.

**Keywords:** Agrobiodiversity, commercialisation, strategy for revitalizing agriculture