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Food Safety Standards, Farm Size and Farm Worker Welfare in Kenya

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Abstract

Understanding the various mechanisms that influence welfare is an important factor in the development debate. Taking the example of EurepGAP in Kenya this study investigates the influence of private food safety standards on farm worker welfare and its difference between small and large farms. This differentiation is increasingly important on the background of concerns of decreasing smallholder share in horticultural export production in developing countries. To understand, how such standards influence worker welfare, Sen's functionings and capabilities approach is employed, which allows a multidimensional welfare assessment. Three basic functionings are analysed to assess welfare: the functioning of being trained, the functioning of earning a decent income and the functioning of being healthy. The survey was conducted in Kenya from June 2006 to October 2006. A two stage sampling procedure was applied to draw a random sample of 316 farm workers on small and large scale EurepGAP certified, as well as small scale non-certified farms. On basis of the collected data, functionings were estimated using a Multiple Indicators and Multiple Causes (MIMIC) structural equation model. The findings suggest that EurepGAP certification has a positive impact on welfare, since workers on EurepGAP certified small scale farms receive more training compared to workers on non-certified small scale farms. At the same time, the higher amount of training received does not translate into higher wages or better physical or health for workers on EurepGAP farms. When comparing large and small-scale EurepGAP certified farms, large farms contribute most to the functioning of earning a decent income, while the amount of training and the health status of the workers do not differ significantly between these farm types. Overall, the findings suggest that workers on large scale EurepGAP certified farms obtain a higher welfare in terms of training and income compared to small scale certified farms and that the welfare is lowest in terms of the three functionings on non-certified small scale farms.

Keywords: Capability approach, EurepGAP, farm scale, farm size, food safety standards, functioning, MIMIC