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Increasing Income by Improving Marketing Strategies for Small-Scale Organic Vegetable Farmers in Tanzania

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Abstract

There is a growing demand for organic agricultural produce in and from Africa, leading to income generating opportunities for farmers all over Africa. This includes vegetable produce. Despite the rise in demand, the domestic market for organic vegetable produce has not been developed. Small-scale farmers who do practice organic agriculture in Africa find export markets in the US and the EU more attractive than domestic markets. However, it is risky for small-scale farmers to rely solely on the export sector. Domestic and regional markets in Africa can be good fallbacks.

No detailed research has been conducted on organic vegetables for the African market. Most research has been geared towards export opportunities for East Africa. Local NGOs that teach small-scale farmers organic agricultural practices do not explain to farmers how to efficiently market their organic produce. There are numerous constraints in the supply chain from the farm gate to the consumer.

This project assesses constraints in the supply chain to explore better marketing strategies for small-scale organic vegetable farmers in order to improve their income. The project has collected data from a questionnaire survey in northern Tanzania in February-March 2008 of more than 200 small-scale organic vegetable farmers, about 50 wholesalers, middlemen, and retailers in the intermediary sector, and more than 200 consumers on aspects of organic vegetable production such as volume, prices, uses, transportation to the market, marketing difficulties, selling points for the main products, main customers, awareness of organic vegetables by market supply chain actors and consumers, and consumers' willingness to pay for organic vegetables. The consumers were chosen by stratified sampling (by income and location), mainly at supermarkets and organic shops, latter additionally in Dar-es-Salaam.

Keywords: domestic markets, marketing strategies, organic agriculture, organic vegetables, small-scale farmers, Tanzania