



Tropentag, September 14-16, 2010, Zurich

“World Food System —  
A Contribution from Europe”

## Attitudes in Consumption of Organic Products in Kenya: A Comparative Analysis of Local and Foreign Consumers in Nairobi

DANIEL KYALO<sup>1</sup>, DANIEL HEESE<sup>2</sup>, BERNHARD FREYER<sup>2</sup>, ERIC BETT<sup>2</sup>, KIBET NGETICH<sup>3</sup>,  
RHODA BIRECH<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Egerton University, Agricultural Economics & Agri-Business Management, Kenya*

<sup>2</sup>*University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU), Inst. of Organic Farming, Austria*

<sup>3</sup>*Egerton University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Kenya*

<sup>4</sup>*Egerton University, Crop Horticulture and Soil Sciences, Kenya*

### Abstract

Though facing many challenges the Kenya's organic subsector has grown steadily since the early 1980's attaining over 200,000 ha of certified organic area and total production standing at approximately 3,500 Mt in 2009. However, it has been established that the demand for organic products is mainly drawn from foreign consumers, with over 75% of the total organic production destined for the export market. Nonetheless, if the growth in organic production has to be sustained, our argument is that local and regional markets are to establish. To create such a market, it would be imperative to understand the bottlenecks that exist within the organic value chain, and also understand the drivers of specific consumption trends.

The current study was an attempt to understand the drivers of consumption of organic products among the tourists and also drivers against the consumption of organic products by local consumers. Comparisons were made along psychological factors (health concerns), Socio-demographic factors (cultural, religion, education and ethno-cultural background) and economic factors (income). Data were collected from potential and current domestic (100) and foreign (100) organic product consumers. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used, with theoretical framing given by theories drawn from Social Psychology. From the study, it emerged that there were disparities between the local and foreign consumers on specific consumer attributes, believed to be the key drivers of organic consumption. Tourists who consumed organic food products in their home countries were also more likely to consciously seek for organic products while in Kenya. This implies that the drive to consume organic products is an intrinsic aspect, driven by personal beliefs, trust and psychological influences. These points out the importance of consumer education and awareness creation, building trust within the local organic food certification systems and creating a culture of environmental friendliness.

**Keywords:** Foreign tourists, local consumers, organic food products, psychological factors