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Is Honey Production an Alternative Pathway out of Poverty by Resource Poor Households in Marginal Lands of Kenya? Evidence from Baringo District

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Abstract

Using data from a cross-sectional survey, this study analysed the potential of honey production in Baringo District as an alternative pathway out of poverty and food security in agricultural marginal areas in Kenya with specific focus on value addition. The data were used to test the hypothesis that value addition in honey is effective in significantly improving the livelihoods of poor households where subsistence and pastoral agriculture is not sufficient to address the poverty and food security challenges in arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) areas. A Heckmann two stage and maximum likelihood logistic regression procedures were used to determine the extent of values addition contingent on the decision of a honey producer to participate in value addition activity, and to assess the link between honey value addition and household poverty status, respectively. The results from the study show that the decision to add value is positively and significantly influenced by the amount of honey harvested, group membership and amount of hours spent on off-farm activities, while it is negatively influenced the age of the farmers and the education level of the household head. The study further shows that although honey production and value addition are profitable, they are only activated within the farming system as an instrument to get out poverty and not as a long term productive activity for livelihood sustenance. It is the poor that continue engaging in the honey production and value addition. From the results it is concluded that existing institutional frameworks do not provide sufficient incentives necessary to for honey production to be beneficial in addressing poverty and food security problems and the policy challenge is to address institutional weaknesses that would making the contribution of honey production and value addition effective in mitigating poverty effects in agriculturally less favoured areas of Kenya.

Keywords: Honey, Kenya, poverty, value addition