



Tropentag, September 16-18, 2015, Berlin, Germany

“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:  
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

## The Role of Food Standards in the Supermarket Value Chain of Traditional Leafy Vegetables, Kenya

HANNA HOMEISTER, ANJA FASSE, ULRIKE GROTE

*Leibniz Universität Hannover, Institute for Environmental Economics and World Trade, Germany*

### Abstract

While producer of traditional leafy vegetables (TLVs) are discussed to have a positive influence on their income if they participate in high-value value chains, e.g. the supermarket value chain, this participation can be restricted by the producers' ability to comply with the required food standards. While prior studies set their focus either on supermarkets or producers, this study takes both sides into account. It aims to identify the drivers of standard development and adoption in the TLV value chain. Therefore, 22 semi-structured interviews were conducted with supermarkets or affiliated specialised wholesaler in an urban county (Nairobi) and around 1,200 structured interviews with producers in two rural counties (Kissi and Kakamega) and three peri-urban counties (Kiambu, Kajiado and Nakuru) on the awareness and plans regarding food standards of TLVs. Some qualitative findings suggest that the main food standards requested by supermarkets from their suppliers, which are either producers or traders, are the freshness and colour of the products. While food safety standards gain in importance, certification schemes, such as organic certification, play only a minor role so far. A value chain analysis however indicates that supermarkets and their specialised wholesaler drive further standard development as they increasingly govern the value chain. On the producer side the findings from an econometric analysis show that the awareness of certification mainly depends on factors related to information access. The willingness to adopt a certification scheme in the future is mainly driven by experience with high-value chain characteristics, such as contracts, and male headed households. Risk takers are more willing to adopt certification in the future. Group membership plays a significant positive role in both awareness and willingness to adopt. These results highlight the importance of policies which improve information access and strengthen farmer groups.

**Keywords:** Awareness, certification, food standards, Kenya, supermarkets, value chain drivers