



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

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

Utilizing Stream-water and Valley-land for Commercializing Indigenous Vegetables Production and Livelihoods Improvement in Peri-urban Kenya

JOSEPH MWANGI¹, HILLARY KIPLANGAT BETT¹, DIMITRIOS ZIKOS², WOLFGANG BOKELMANN²

¹*Egerton University, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management, Kenya*

²*Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Albrecht Daniel Thaer-Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences (ADTI), Germany*

Abstract

Kiambu County is among the peri-urban areas within the proposed Nairobi metropolis and a major source of fresh agricultural produce for consumers in Nairobi City. African Indigenous vegetables are currently among the most highly sought after leafy vegetables by consumers due to their nutritional profile, medicinal qualities and a change in attitude towards them. Smallholder farmers in Kiambu produce significant amounts of these vegetables for the city but unlike rural areas, land is a limiting factor for agricultural activities. To the smallholder producers, especially those nearer the city where demand is high, these vegetables have provided a valuable income generating opportunity and high prospects for livelihood improvement. Despite this potential, the vegetable supply remains erratic especially during the dry spells when production is very low and prices correspondingly very high making them unavailable for most consumers. Smallholder producers in the county have adapted to the seasonal gluts by adopting diverse production systems in the high potential areas of the county. To ensure year round supply, smallholders have adopted irrigation agriculture either in valleys along stream banks or by installing motorized irrigation stations along the streams to irrigate vegetable fields away from the streams. Occasionally conflicts have emerged among producers when upstream stations inhibit down-stream water flow. Similarly, valley land leasing has become a common practice among non-vegetable producing land owners and lessors interested in AIVs production. Using both quantitative and qualitative data the paper evaluates how access to irrigation water influences degree of AIV commercialisation and impact on livelihoods of smallholders, sources of water use conflicts and the resolution mechanisms adopted by producers. Additionally, utilisation of valley land is investigated to find out the potential of land leasing on market integration and livelihoods of non-land owners in the land scarce areas such as Kiambu County.

Keywords: Land market, market-integration, scarcity and value, smallholders