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“Solidarity in a competing world —
fair use of resources”

Horticulture Value Chains in Ethiopia: Opportunities for Better Nutrition and New Market Access?

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Abstract

Fruits and vegetables are the most important source of micronutrients and are essential for a balanced and healthy diet. Diversifying and increasing horticulture production can help to overcome malnutrition and poverty by augmenting household consumption and also create new market access for smallholders. Moreover, horticulture value chains can offer new income and employment opportunities in trading and processing sectors. The present research uses a nutrition-sensitive value chain approach for horticulture development in the Yayu biosphere reserve in Ethiopia. To identify possible diversification and/or intensification strategies, we mapped the already existing value chains and assessed market opportunities for new products, including the most important actors along the whole chain. The main drivers, bottlenecks and potentials for the intensification and/or diversification of fruit and vegetable production include: on the supply side, seasonal constrained production systems, competition with cash crops (mainly coffee), crop damages through wild animals, lack of nutrition-sensitive farming systems, gender division in horticultural production, lack of research and extension supports, marketing problems and non-availability of improved technologies; on the demand side, lack of awareness for nutritional issues, existence of underutilised crops, reluctance to consume indigenous fruits and vegetables and low purchasing power; and on the intermediation side, technical problems with storage, processing and packaging, existence of weekly markets in the nearby towns but with inadequate infrastructure for perishable products, seasonal unavailability of products in the market. Thus, nutrition-sensitive horticulture value chain development may need a multi-dimensional strategy of awareness creation between all stakeholders, specific nutrition-sensitive extension services, infrastructural and technical improvements and market development as well as political support from the local to the national level.

Keywords: Diversification, fruits, intensification, nutrition, value chains, vegetables