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Local logistics and transport for African indigenous vegetables in sub-Saharan Africa: A case of Kakamega and Vihiga counties in Kenya

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Abstract

African indigenous vegetables (AIVs) are an important source of nutrition and income for smallholder farmers and rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), still, there are postharvest losses. Factors that shape the local logistics and transport as the prerequisite for the reduction of postharvest loss are yet to be established with certainty. The main objective of this paper was to investigate the nature and actors in the local logistics and transport of AIVs in SSA. Although several studies give important insights into the functioning of the AIVs supply chain, it remains difficult to understand the complex “interplay” of factors that shape the local logistics and transport of AIVs in SSA. This study deployed a hybrid approach encompassing a literature review, focus group discussions, and interviews. The results indicated that at each stage of a supply chain, there is a specific set of actors. The data from the field survey revealed that farmers have longer periods in AIV activities (30 years) while transporters have short periods (one to 10 years). This implies that farmers had ventured into AIVs investment for 20 years without reliable logistics and transportation services. Also, the results indicate that local logistics and transport of AIVs are shaped by a range of specific factors including; physical, social, cultural, legal, and economic factors. An understanding of the existing logistics and transport for the AIVs’ local supply chain may enhance productivity and raise expectations. This can improve the reduction of postharvest losses and consequently improvising the nutritional benefits and community livelihood in rural areas of SSA. The information from this study is useful to AIVs’ farmers, transporters, traders, nutritionists, and policymakers.

Keywords: Actors, African indigenous vegetables, nature, supply chain