

Social and economic factors impacting food production: A case study of Kiharu District Muranga County of Central Kenya.

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Abstract

Globally food production trends indicate that food production is increasing. (FAO 2008) indicates that there is more than enough food in the world for everyone. FAO notes that in fact over the last 20 years, food production has generally increased compared to the rate of population increase in the world. Despite this encouraging trend Kiharu District in Muranga county has registered declining food production trends. This paper therefore seeks to investigate the major factors underlying the decline in food production the district. The district has arable land suitable for production of various food crops such as maize, beans, sorghum, millet, bananas, cassava, arrow roots etc.

The following main factors may have influenced the decline in food production trends. Erratic and inadequate rainfall patterns, wrangles in irrigation schemes, high costs of farm inputs, lack of viable markets, high incidences of pests and diseases, scarcity of certified seeds, poor infrastructure poor storage facilities among others.

The objective of the paper therefore were:

1. Investigating the food production trends in Kiharu District
2. Determining the underlying factors that influence the food trends in Kiharu
3. Recommending/ suggesting ways for reversing the food production declining trends in Kihara

Data for this paper was collected using the following methods: Secondary data methods collection including review of literature, position papers, UN documents, internet sources and in depth interviews with key informants.

Data was analyzed using descriptive methods and presented in the form of tables and thematic presentations.

The findings indicate that food production is indeed on the decline. The paper concludes that the decline is indeed worrying given the high rate of population increase in the area. The paper recommends that the following measures be urgently taken to reverse the trend.

- i) Community mobilization for production of adaptable staple food crops, preferably indigenous crops such as cassava, yams, millet, sorghum bananas and arrow roots.
- ii) Subsidizing of farmers efforts by the state in food production activities eg through affordable credit facilities, farm inputs such as certified seeds and fertilizers as well as improving the infrastructure in the area.
- iii) Formation of organized marketing groups, provision of information of agro-processing for value addition.