SMALLHOLDER MARKET ACCESS IN KYOGA PLAINS AGRICULTURAL ZONE IN UGANDA

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Fig. 1: A promising orchard (PMA, 2009):

Fig 2: Ungraded fruits on display in a market

Fig 3: Packaged fruits for bulk sale

Back ground

Horticulture is estimated to grow at a rate of 20% pa and it is one of the fastest growing non-traditional agricultural export sectors in Uganda (Sonko *et al.*, 2005). Due to its potential the government put in place measures to support its growth and development. Citrus farming is one of the enterprises supported and promoted with the aim of commercialising production. Adoption of   improved production technologies   has led to increased production (Fig 1). Unfortunately, the marketing strategies have not been adequately addressed. Consequently, farmers access to market remains a major challenge.

Objective

The study aimed at determining factors affecting smallholders' market access so as to advise on crucial strategic interventions.

Methodology

The study was carried out in 4 districts of Kyoga Plains Agricultural Zone where citrus farming is an important activity. It covered four subcounties per district.   The sample was drawn using respondent driven and random sampling criteria to minimise bias and iensure nclusion of farmers with knowledge and experience in citrus farming and marketing. Primary data was collected using a pretested structured questionnaire

Results

Based on cross-section data involving 446 households,. preliminary findings show that   households involved in citrus production had tree stocks ranging from less than 100 to over 200 trees (Table 1).   The highest proportion of households (52.5) had less than 100 trees and contributing 18% of orange fruits output (Fig 4).   Oranges were sold in fresh form to domestic or regional markets.   Domestically, orange fruits were traded on in city, town, and village markets and at road sides. While regionally, fresh fruits were sold to traders from Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Sudan. Polythene bags were used to package oranges for measurement and transportation(Fig 3). Generally, only 53% of the total trees stock is fruiting and 16% of output constituted sales (Fig 5). Besides, average age of trees hows that orchards are in their early productive stage. This indicates that output is likely to greatly   increase when fruiting trees and their ages increase.

While Ordinary Least Squares regression results showed that output,quantity output price, household size, point of sale, age of household head and location significantly affect access to market .

Table 1: Household orange production statistics for 2010

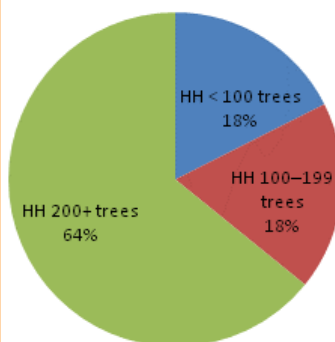|	HH with < 100 trees	HH with 100–199 trees	HH with 200+ trees
Households proportions	52.50%	27.10%	20.40%
Tree stock proportions	15.41%	25.95%	58.64%
Average trees stock	45	145	435
Average age of trees	6.62	5.35	6.38
Fruiting trees	17.56%	18.27%	64.17%

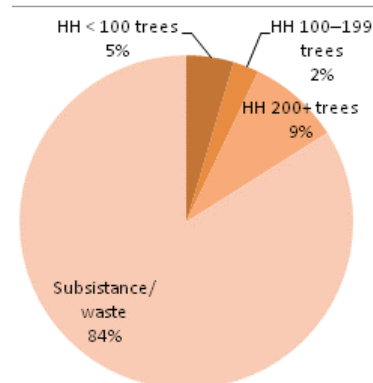**Fig 4: Orange fruits output by household category**

Fig 5: Orange sales by household category

References

Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) (2009). Commodity Value Chain Approach for Prosperity.

Sonko Robinah, Njue Evelyn, Ssebuliba James M., and de Jager Andre (2005).   A report of the study of the Horticultural Sector in Uganda. Pro-Poor Horticulture in East Africa and South East Asia.

Acknowledgements