

ABSTRACT

In this paper, the research was done to evaluate the effects that tissue culture bananas has imposed on small scale farmers in Thika, Kiambu County.

Bananas constitute an important component of farm enterprises in the mid altitudes of central and eastern provinces of Kenya. In recent years the crop has steadily gained importance over traditional cash crops, e.g. coffee, and various short season horticultural crops grown mostly for export markets. Despite its increasing importance, the crop's production faces intractable constraints. Interventions have previously focused on increasing availability of healthy seedlings and strengthening farmer capacity to manage pests. Recent indications are that there is need to re-think current approaches to enhancing productivity. The study focused on establishing the effects of the adoption of tissue culture bananas by the farmers. This was a quantitative and qualitative study and it involved collection of primary data from banana farmers. Purposive sampling was used to reach the target population of 13000 farmers.

Thika was randomly selected for this study mainly because it's good climatic conditions and soils that favors banana production. Data for this study was collected by use of questionnaire which was administered to the sample population who will filled in the required information. Data collected was analyzed using the quantitatively through SPSS, and will be presented on tables, pie charts, and graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed by screening all the notes taken and presented in narratives where necessary. In many areas the qualitative data was used to give meaning to the findings to the quantitative data.

Tissue culture banana production was found to have benefits to the farmers and the society at large. Some of the benefits were for example increased produce and income, increased supply of food and there socio-economic impacts like source of employment. Tissue culture banana projects have a high rate of return hence can be advocated to farmers to implement. Despite the above benefits, there are some constraints undermining the TC banana farming e.g. it's a capital intensive under taking, increased additional inputs and most of the farmers have difficulties in raising capital. Recommended areas of action are improving the infrastructure, strengthening

agricultural research and extension services, educating/training the farmers about TC bananas and provision of credit to farmers.