An Assessment of the Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Fertilizer Use among Sugarcane Farmers in Mumias

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A22/1796/2010

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A research Submitted to the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nairobi.
Declaration

This research is my original work and has not been submitted for any degree award in any university.

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A22/1796/2010
Abstract

In this paper, the researcher investigated the socio economic factors affecting the likelihood of households to use fertilizer in sugarcane production in Mumias. In Kenya sugarcane production supports the livelihoods of approximately 6 million people. The objectives of the study were; to describe the fertilizer use patterns in Mumias and to assess the socio economic factors affecting fertilizer use.

Sugarcane production in out growers contracted farms has been declining in the past few years from 137 tons of cane per ha (TCH) in 1973 to 58 TCH in 2010. This is due to inadequate fertilizer use as the main reason. It is in view of this problem that the objectives of the study were formulated to determine the factors affecting fertilizer use in sugarcane farming in Mumias.

This was a quantitative study and it involved collection of primary data from sugarcane farmers. Mumias population was used for this study. Purposive sampling was used to reach the target population of 40 farmers. Mumias was randomly selected from the other districts in the county mainly because it is situated close to the MSC and it is the leading in sugarcane production. Data for this study was collected by researcher administering semi-structured questionnaires to the sample population who filled in the required information. Data collected was analyzed using the IBM SPSS software which helped in getting means, modes, standard deviations and variances of the data of all the important variables. Data was presented in the form of linear regression models and frequency tables.

The likelihood of fertilizer use was explained by the two significant factors which were the level of education of the household head and the size of land under sugarcane production. The results showed that the two factors had a positive impact on fertilizer use. Those households with many years of education are likely to use fertilizer. Households with large tracts of land are likely to use fertilizer as compared to those with small pieces of land.

The research recommended that the MSC should ensure that the farmers get the necessary education to help them know the importance of using fertilizer to increase sugarcane yields. The Government also ought to provide incentives to farmers to make them produce more sugarcane to increase growth of the sugar industry.