Benefits and Barriers to Sustainable Land Management: Farmer Perceptions in Western Kenya

Anna Jackson

Soil degradation, climate change, and socio-economic factors all influenced the farmers in Shikomoli and Mukuyu villages and how they viewed their land. Notable findings include:

• GMO seeds, fertilizers, intercropping, manure/compost, terracing, hole-planting and using crop residue were the preferred SLM techniques.

• Major barriers to SLM practices were the difficulty of purchasing farm inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers, and labor.

• Cows and other livestock are viewed as significant because they provide free material, such as manure and dairy.

• Women and men showed very little differences in how they used their land, although terracing, a physically difficult farm activity, was reported being utilized more by men.

• Common concerns include corrupted or adulterated seeds and fertilizers; theft from hired labor; a decrease in the preferred SLM techniques.

Results

Methods

I used the mixed-methods Evaluating Land Management Option (ELMO) framework to see how farmers make choices about their land and use sustainable land management techniques.

Introduction & Background

“Subsistence maize farmers in western Kenya are facing challenges related to long-term viability of agricultural production. Over time, population booms, the loss of traditional farming practices, land fragmentation, and climate change have had catastrophic effects on food production. Currently, soil quality is seen as the biggest barrier for small-holder farmers in East Africa. Without the help of fertilizers, GMO seeds, pesticides and other costly and often inaccessible inputs, farmers are unable to grow enough food to sustain their households and communities. In order to mitigate depleting soil nutrition and to assist farmers in growing substantial yields, researchers have begun to look at sustainable land management practices. I used a mixed-methods framework in western Kenya to see how farmers make choices about their land and use sustainable land management techniques.”

Acknowledgements

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References


Recommendations

“Everywhere stands on their own. One succeeds, one doesn’t, and no one cares. That’s not how it used to be.” – Male, 54

“A mixture of focus group discussions and individual household exercises.

• Research "with," not "on" participants.

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