

Export Standards, Market Institutions and Smallholder Farmer Exclusion from Fresh Export Vegetable High Value Chains: Experiences from Ethiopia, Kenya and Zambia

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Abstract

Many African countries are diversifying exports into fresh export vegetables, grown mainly by smallholder farmers. However, markets for these new products have stringent safety standards. This paper examines the green bean high value chain (HVC) for African exports to Europe to identify the critical points at which exporters strictly enforce buyers' quality requirements and the risk of exclusion of family farmers at these points. It then discusses the strategies African countries have used to get-around these challenges and maintain participation of some farmers. The paper identifies six critical control points but finds that farmers are most threatened with exclusion from green bean HVC at the farm-level and collection-centre control points. To overcome effects of these control points, study countries used two non-market strategies namely, collective action and public-private partnerships. These findings imply that the market, if left on its own, could adopt solutions that exclude smallholder farmers from export HVC