

**E3034. FACTORS AFFECTING ADOPTION OF NERICA RICE BY  
SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN MWEA, KENYA**

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**Abstract**

In the past decade, a lot of emphasis has been placed on revitalizing agriculture as the engine for economic growth in Kenya. Technological advancements such as introduction of NERICA rice are necessary for agricultural development, but not a sufficient step towards increased food production *per se* unless adopted. This study aims to fill the knowledge gap and to assess the link between NERICA rice adoption by small scale farmers in Mwea, Kirinyaga County. The study uses primary data which is subjected to a predictive design so as to give insight into the factors influencing adoption of NERICA. A semi structured questionnaire was used to collect data and a probit regression model used for analysis. Descriptive analysis shows that NERICA rice adopters have more exposure to formal education than the non-adopters and rely more on family labor than hired labor. Regression analysis shows that farmers' decision to adopt NERICA rice is positively influenced by total land owned, labor availability and input market. However adoption is negatively influenced by distance to the nearest extension service provider. It therefore seems that targeting farmers with access to more resources such as land and labor is likely to enhance the adoption of NERICA rice in the study area. Further, increasing uptake of extension services by bringing providers closer to farmers in Mwea is likely to boost adoption. Eventually these policy measures are likely to contribute towards increased rice production by benefiting agricultural stakeholders such as the producers and the government therefore enhancing food security in the country.

*Key words: adoption, NERICA rice, food security*