

F2013. THE POTENTIAL OF CASSAVA VALUE CHAIN IN ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY AND INCOME GENERATION BY SMALL HOLDER FARMERS IN KENYA

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Abstract

Africa is the biggest user and producer of cassava (*Manihot Esculenta*), the World's fourth ranking energy crop and staple food for around one billion people in 105 different countries of the World. However, despite increasing demand and production potential, cassava still remains an 'orphan crop' in many countries of Africa, usually cultivated only by small subsistence farmers with little or no access to improved varieties or inputs, cut off from commercial scale marketing or agro-processing industries. This is the same case in Kenya, where cassava has ever been treated as a famine crop, to fall back on when popular staples are inadequately available. A lot of research has been carried out to develop high yielding, non disease prone varieties, but the attitude has still not changed to mainstream cassava into diets, and commercial production, marketing and agro-processing in the country. This paper explores the use of value chain approach to bring out its potential to enhance food security and the livelihoods of communities through increased production, marketing and value addition, and incorporation into local dietaries.