

What determines farmers' awareness and interest in adopting cricket farming? A pilot study from Kenya

Abstract.

Farming crickets for human consumption is emerging as a promising novel and sustainable animal-source food production system. Cricket farming in Kenya first began in 2013; however, adoption rates have been slower than expected. This paper presents a pilot study of farmers' awareness of and interest in adopting cricket farming as a new agricultural technology in three counties of Nyanza district, Kenya. A household questionnaire was conducted and included farmers who practised cricket farming as well as those who did not practice cricket farming. Thirteen focus group discussions were also held with adopters (those farming crickets), exposed (trained) non-adopters, and non-exposed (untrained) non-adopters. Our results show that awareness is influenced by proximity to an existing cricket farm; the number of sources of agricultural information; frequency of consumption of animal source foods; frequency of fruit consumption; farm size; crop diversity score; off-farm income; frequency of visits to an extension office; and the consumption of crickets. Some of these factors – together with ownership of a mobile phone, the degree of risk averseness and the consumption of termites – also influence interest in adopting cricket farming. Adequate equipment, space, and housing were the most cited barriers to the adoption of cricket farming. Overall, the results of this pilot study suggest that cricket farming is still relatively unknown and adoption is low amongst rural smallholders in Kenya, which is explained by various factors. However, this pilot study should be followed with a more comprehensive study to investigate the adoption of cricket farming and its drivers.

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