

**AN EVALUATION OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING
COFFEE PRODUCTION AND FARMER INCOMES
IN THE HIGHLANDS OF MOUNT KENYA**

JOSEPH MWITI MUTUA

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

OF

KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

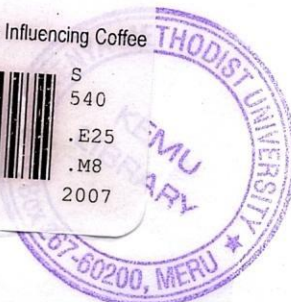
MAY 2007

An Evaluation Of The Factors Influencing Coffee



1022759

S
540
.E25
.M8
2007



ABSTRACT

Kenyan farmers face a lot of challenges in production and marketing of coffee. A field study was carried out in three districts in the highlands of Mount Kenya, a region which produces about 80% of the national coffee production where coffee production and farmer incomes have been declining for the last ten years. The objective of the study was to quantify changes in coffee production, quality, prices and farmers incomes. It was also to determine the interrelationships between production, quality, prices, farmer earnings and finally establish the influence of the trends in coffee production, quality, prices and payments on farmers and farmer organisations. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to coffee farmers, society executive management members, farmer organizations in Kirinyaga, Embu and Meru Central districts and also to government institutions, milling and marketing agents. A total of 137 representatives were interviewed.

The study showed that the coffee industry in Kenya is affected negatively by production of low quality coffee, delayed payments, low farmer earnings, low coffee production, lack of use of farm inputs, long marketing chain, mismanagement of co-operative societies, high prices of farm inputs and lack of credit facilities. Farmers felt that coffee earnings can be improved by shortening the marketing chain, availability of farming credit to coffee farmers, production of high quality coffee, and better management of the coffee cooperative societies.

It was concluded that, the farmers require to produce high volumes of quality coffee. There is need to set a fund to avail affordable credit to farmers. Strategy for value addition and production of specialty coffee should be evolved in coffee marketing. A change of government policy in coffee production and marketing requires to be effected, in order to improve organizational coffee marketing structures.