

Post-Harvest Handling, Storage and Protection of Maize as a Strategy of Poverty Reduction

The Case of Babati District, Manyara Region

By

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Abstract

The study investigated the post-harvest handling, storage and protection practices of maize in the study area as a strategy of poverty reduction. The specific objectives were: (i) To identify the proportion of farmers producing maize in the study area; (ii) To assess the postharvest practices applied by farmers; (iii) To examine the post-harvest handling storage and protection facilities used by farmers; and (iv) To identify the challenges facing small- scale farmers during post-harvest practices. The study design used was a cross-sectional survey. Data was collected using questionnaires supported by personal observations and formal discussion with key informants. Descriptive statistics was determined where the implications of its results lead to recommendations.

The findings from this study show that there is substantial maize loss during post-harvest handling, storage and protection practices in the study area that ranges between 27% and 37%. It was discovered that at almost every post-harvest handling practice carried out by farmers there is a minimum maize loss of about 50 kilograms at each one acre maize harvests. The major challenges facing farmers during post-harvest handling, storage and protection of maize include: the effects of insect infestation in the storage facilities, too expensive pesticides from farmers to afford, lack of proper storage facilities, ineffective pesticides, poor transport facilities, poor maize handling practices among others as pointed out in this study. There is conclusive evidence that, post-harvest maize loss is huge in the study area, calling for the immediate actions to combat the situation. This study recommends the following in ensuring that post-harvesting maize losses are controlled to a level that is profitable to farmers and the government as well. Immediate concern by all stakeholders that are responsible in assisting farmers combat the problem, calling for the need of farmers to be educated on the importance of ensuring that proper facilities are available and be used, training farmers on the necessity for ensuring proper maize handling soon after harvesting and in all other associated post-harvesting practices, calling for the government and others responsible bodies to work on the farmers dissatisfaction on the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of pesticides particularly that used for storing maize among Other recommendations as pointed out in this study.