

Title Production and marketing problems in small scale horticultural farming in Botswana
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Abstract

Production and marketing problems faced by subsistence horticulture farmers in Botswana hinder the potential production which forces the country to import 80% of the fruit and vegetable demand. The local farmers fail to compete with the high quality and low priced imported vegetables. The problems in disposing off the horticultural produce depress the farmers and this negatively affects local horticultural production and farm income. Commercialization of the small horticultural sector requires the development of market-oriented production, as opposed to the occasional sale of subsistence surplus. Success in commercializing this sector depends on the orientation of production to meet market demand and on the removal, or reduction, of a broad range of production and marketing constraints. A survey based study was conducted in Botswana in the year 2007-08 focusing on the identification of the problems associated with small scale horticultural production and marketing, their causes and possible suggestions thereof. Pareto analysis was used to prioritize (ranking) the problems and their causes. A total of ten problems in horticultural production were identified and, poor access to inputs, high fuel costs, pests and diseases, high input costs, insufficient infrastructure, lack of finance, shortage of skilled labour, and breakdown of irrigation systems were found to be the major production problems (85.23% contribution). Out of the seven problems identified in horticultural marketing; insufficient production and inconsistent supply of local produce, high transportation costs, poor marketing infrastructure, high competition with imports, and lack of marketing skills were the major marketing problems (84.36% contribution). The causes of each of the marketing problems were also identified and ranked. Subsidized fuel price, increase area under cultivation, effective implementation of efficient cropping plan, easy access to finance, building new market places, proper dissemination of market information, establishment of Agro Service Centers and revision of existing import policy were among the suggestions to minimize the marketing problems in Botswana.