

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Tea Production in Kenya Impact Assessment of Two Training Models



2012 Study
conducted
by LEI
Wageningen
University

See the
full study,
“Sustainable
Tea Production
in Kenya:
Impact
Assessment
of Rainforest
Alliance
and Farmer
Field School
Training” at
edepot.wur.nl/214044

Tea grows
on a farm in
Kenya.

*photo by
Anita Neville*

Introduction

Smallholder tea farmers in Kenya are organized through the Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA), which works with farmers to produce, process and market high quality teas. KTDA promotes better tea production practices in order to help smallholder farmers increase production quantity and achieve certification—with the ultimate goal of strengthening existing tea markets and establishing new ones. Various KTDA farms are pursuing certification by Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade, and UTZ. Given that the Lipton brand aims to source all tea from Rainforest Alliance Certified™ farms by 2015, studies such as this one are critical to the refinement of Rainforest Alliance training programs.

Study Goals and Methods

This study was designed to determine the impact of two training approaches—Rainforest Alliance training and KTDA's own Farmer Field School (FFS) training—on tea farmers' knowledge of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), their implementation of GAPs, their use of inputs such as fertilizers and labor, and their production and income.

Researchers visited 356 tea-farming households in July 2010 to collect baseline, pre-training data on these variables. Some of these farmers remained part of the untrained control group, while others were trained using the FFS method, the Rainforest Alliance method, or a combination of both. In January 2012, researchers visited the farms again and collected post-training data at 331 matched tea-farming households. The findings discussed here pertain specifically to the impacts of Rainforest Alliance training.

Results

The study found the following:

- While the untrained control group's knowledge of GAPs did not increase significantly between 2010 and 2012, all types of training led to an increase in farmer knowledge. Farmers receiving both Rainforest Alliance and FFS training demonstrated the highest increases.
- Rainforest Alliance training had a positive impact on the increase in the application of environmental GAPs in particular. These

The Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior.
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Esther and
Simon Langat,
tea farmers
working with
the Kenya Tea
Development
Agency.

*photo by
Caroline Irby*



include practices such as the use of a riparian buffer zone and the proper disposal of household waste.

- Rainforest Alliance training was associated with an increase in leaf quality between 2010 and 2012. No significant changes in productivity were observed for any of the training groups or the control group over the course of the study. (Given that improved practices often take a few years to bring about productivity gains, we are not surprised by these findings.)
- Nearly half of the Rainforest Alliance-trained farmers reporting achieving certification by the end of the study and, of these, 52 percent indicated that they had received a higher price or other financial bonus because of their Rainforest Alliance Certified status. Despite this premium, Rainforest Alliance-trained farmers' increases in net income between 2010 and 2012 were not significantly different from net income gains made by other farmers. This might be due to higher production costs (such as labor)

on Rainforest Alliance-trained farms; pending funding, the study authors would like to conduct further work to determine if this is the case.

- 97 percent of farmers who had participated in Rainforest Alliance training activities evaluated the activities as very positive and indicated that they had benefited from them. Most benefits they cited were environmental and social—such as improved soil conservation, wildlife protection, and understanding of health and safety practices. This positive assessment indicates that farmers place a high value on the many non-monetary benefits of Rainforest Alliance training.

Conclusion

The LEI Wageningen UR study demonstrates that Rainforest Alliance training strengthens farmers' implementation of environmental GAPs, increases leaf quality and, according to half of the surveyed farmers from Rainforest Alliance Certified farms, leads to a price premium for their tea.

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