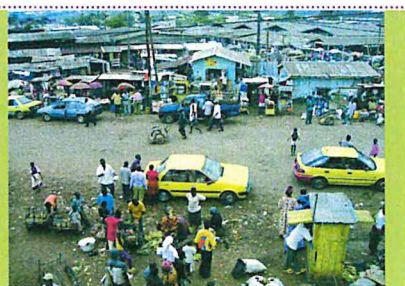


Periurban horticultural dynamics: the case of a small town in south-west Cameroon from 1995 to 2004

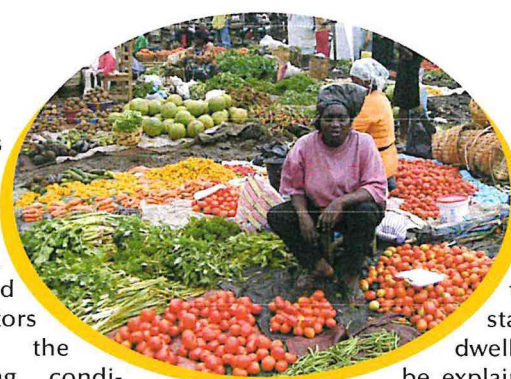


PERIURBAN horticultural crops generate large returns and are replacing root and tuber production. This is revealed by the first results of a series of surveys conducted between 1995 and 2004 in a town at the foot of Mount Cameroon in south-west Cameroon.

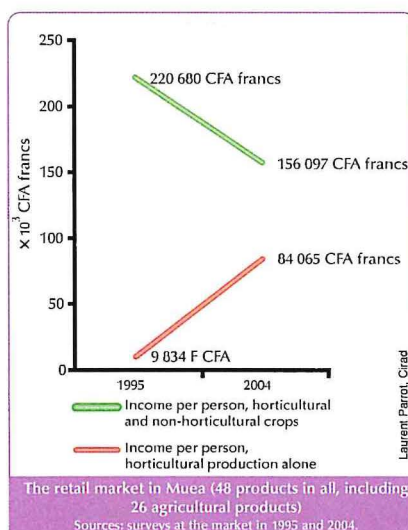
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Results

The town of Muea some fifty kilometres from Douala and its port has a population of about 10,000. It is typical of many towns of the same kind scattered through western and south-western Cameroon. The first results of the survey conducted from 1995 to 2004 show that most indicators

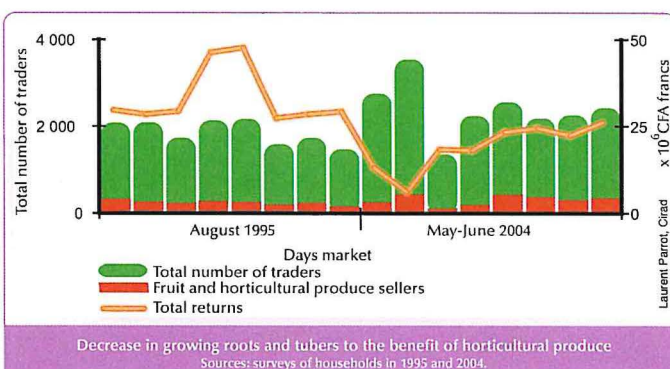


of the living conditions of households improved, and especially incomes, accommodation and education. However, the details show that the proportion of income earned in agriculture has fallen by 30% to the benefit of emerging urban occupations, and especially services in the informal sector. This is the result of the urbanisation of the secondary towns in Africa and increased density of



the urban fabric. Income from horticulture has a major position in household farming activities as returns from this occupation increased nearly ten-fold during the same period and now form more than half of the agricultural incomes of families. The 1995 and 2004 surveys consisted of (a) a detailed

population census, (b) a survey of a sample of households, (c) a survey at the local market, and (d) a survey of the 80 tontines in the town. The results show that although the size of the population remained comparatively stable from 1995 to 2004, the number of dwellings practically doubled, which might be explained by an increase in the number of house owners and by 'return migration' from the large urban centres (retired people).



The 1995 and 2004 surveys found 13 horticultural products in a total of 26 agricultural products including coffee and cocoa. With the exception of cash crops that have specific sectors, all this produce was sold on Muea market. This is a place for meetings and business that assembles an average of 2000 tra-



Partnerships

Investigations were performed in 2004 within the framework of the PCP-Grand Sud Cameroun (Research Co-operation Partnership) coordinated by CIRAD, IRAD (Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement), the Faculté d'Agronomie de Science Agricole (FASA) and the University of Yaoundé. The operational phases were conducted with the support of the University of Buea, the Buea Délégation provinciale de statistique (Provincial Statistics Delegation) and the Institut national de statistique (National Statistics Institute) in Yaoundé. In 1995, operations were supported by the OCISCA programme (Observatoire pour le Changement et l'Innovation Sociale au Cameroun), IRD (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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