Horticulture and city supply in Africa: evidence from South-West Cameroon

**Method**

Muea was surveyed in August 1995 and again in June 2004 using independent surveys. The surveys included a complete census of households (all houses and households were recorded for a random selection), a household survey (300) and a market survey. Due to their nature and scope, the household and market surveys provided complementary and cross-checked information.

**Results**

Household incomes increased by 14%, with a large shift from farm to nonfarm income. Within agriculture, activity shifted from staple crops to horticulture, both for sale and in home consumption. Results also revealed a 40% fall in market turnover and a substitution effect between farm and non-farm incomes.

City supply and periurban trade has gained in importance: exports to Douala increased from 22% to 63% of the market's turnover. Horticultural crops are still marginal to the total household incomes, but their share is rising. Only a small fraction of farmers specialize in only horticultural crop production, most of them practice sharecropping with staple crops.

**Perspectives**

In fact, urban growth affects not only major towns but also most parts of the hinterlands with rural households. Improved roads have proved to be efficient in increasing regional trade. However, declining land availability impacts on agricultural practices. Horticultural production is still marginal in Cameroon but it is gaining in importance. More attention should be devoted to the monitoring of the intensification process in agriculture, especially for horticulture.

Further reading


