Abstract

A participatory diagnosis (PD) was carried out in Makueni District, eastern Kenya, with a view of identifying farmer awareness on soil fertility status so as to identify gaps for research on soil fertility improvement. The results indicate that farmers are aware of soil types, soil characteristics soil, soil fertility status and soil distribution of different soil types in their villages. In addition, the farmers are aware of declining soil fertility, which they attributed to soil erosion, continuous cropping, poor methods of cultivation, and inadequate farm inputs. The farmers use farmyard manure to improve soil fertility and are aware of the quality of different manures used in their farms. The types of farmyard manures as ranked by farmers in decreasing quality are poultry manure>goat manure>cattle manure. However it was revealed that cattle manure is commonly used because it is readily available though not adequate. Crop residues, especially those of grain legumes, are also used for soil fertility improvement. In this paper the results of farmer participation research meetings with emphasis on soil fertility management in eastern Kenya are discussed