

Abstract

A social economic study was conducted to assess the performance indices of frame hive beekeeping and the traditional technology of Kenya. The objectives were to describe the socioeconomic characteristics of beekeeping farmers, establish the factors that determine the choice of beekeeping technology in the study area and the constraints that affect the adoption of the entire beekeeping technology. Data were collected in four Locations of Kasaala, Mulundi, Waita and Kyuso of Kitui County, Kenya. Systematic random sampling was applied to a selected 30 households each in the four locations giving a total of 120 households. The results revealed that of the 120 respondents, 69% and 31% were males and females respectively, 77% were in the 18-55 years age bracket, 64% had attained at least primary level of education. The results further showed that 77% of the respondents were agro-pastoralists involved in crop and livestock production. About 58% regarded beekeeping as a major economic activity an indication that beekeeping was an important socio-economic undertaking in the area. The results further showed that a number of factors determined choice of beekeeping technology which included the cost, availability, management regime, productivity level and quality of hive products. The study had showed that there were a number of constraints that affected adoption of the entire beekeeping technology these included; recurrent drought, attack by pests and predators, low prices, insecurity and inadequate extension services. From the findings of the study, focused extension training should be provided to beekeepers to equip them with the necessary skills on bee management.