

Productivity and Growth in Organic Value Chains (ProGrOV)

SHARING ORGANIC PRODUCTS INFORMATION KEY TO BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE AMONG TRADERS AND CONSUMERS

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Introduction

In an ideal situation, consumers and traders ought to have accurate information on the quality of organic produce. Lack of adequate sharing of product information among food supply chain actors has been shown to encourage unethical behavior thereby causing mistrust and reduced confidence on organic products.

To address this, there is need to follow the movement of a food through specified stages of production, processing and distribution (traceability). The project focused on traceability among organic kales farmers and traders in Nairobi's high market ends.

Approach

A list of all farmers and traders, both certified and uncertified organic was provided by KOAN.

Using a semi-structured questionnaire, data on the relationships between different stakeholders, stakeholders' interactions, and information shared among stakeholders, and the factors that contribute to information sharing were collected.

Using the data collected, information flow was assessed and modalities for its sharing among different actors was formulated.



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Results

- Most of the organic kale farmers sold their products directly to consumers using basket schemes, at the farmers' markets or through farm gate arrangements (Figure 1).
- When farmers sold their produce directly to the consumer, it increased consumer trust by improving sharing of information.
- Organic product information was fairly shared but depended on the trust and confidence based on existing relationships between traders and consumers.

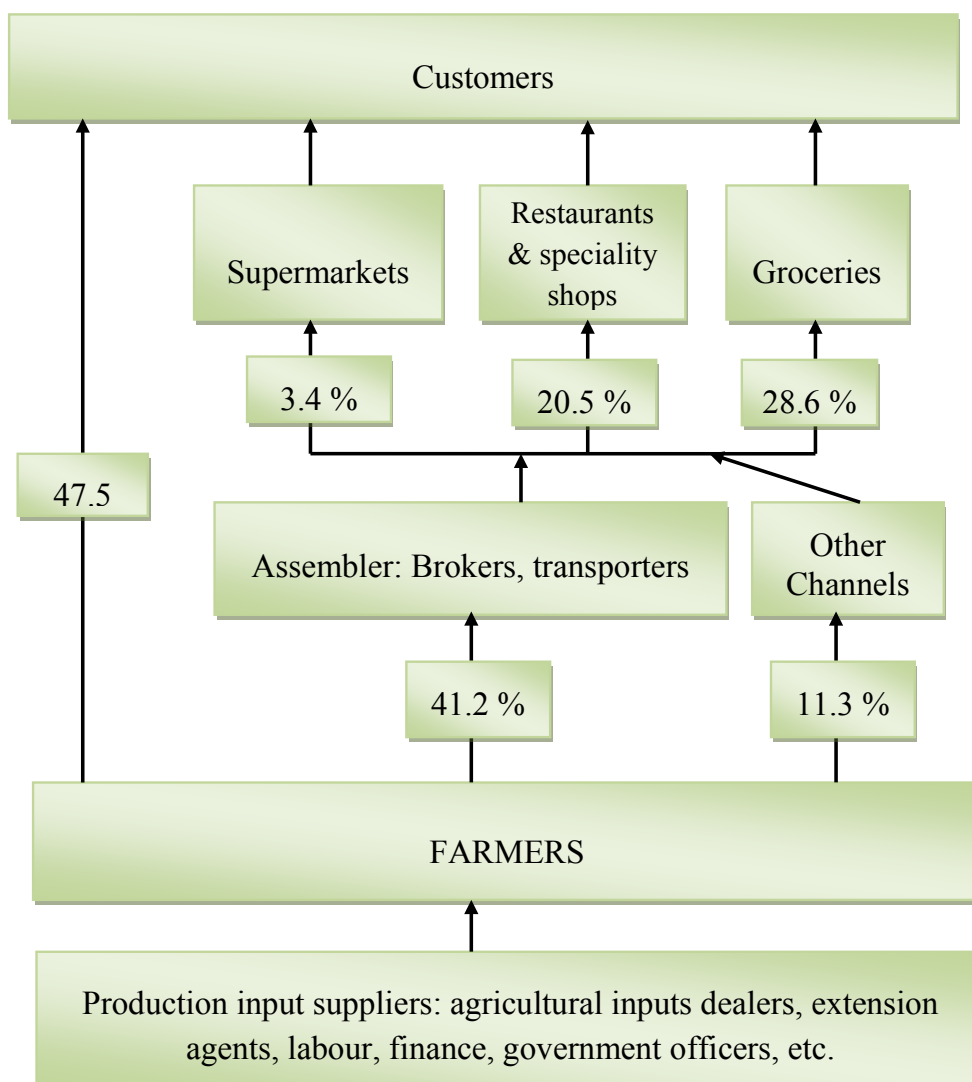


Fig.1: Organic kale supply chain in Nairobi

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- Practices that hindered smooth sharing of organic products information included; incomplete record keeping by farmers and traders, lack of coding, tagging and labeling and the perceived high cost of keeping accurate records.
- Based on Good Documentation Practices (GDP), most farmers and traders don't follow the guidelines properly; hence the incomplete records kept (Figure 2).
- Good information flow would depend on farmer monitoring schemes, certification process, record keeping and level of training.

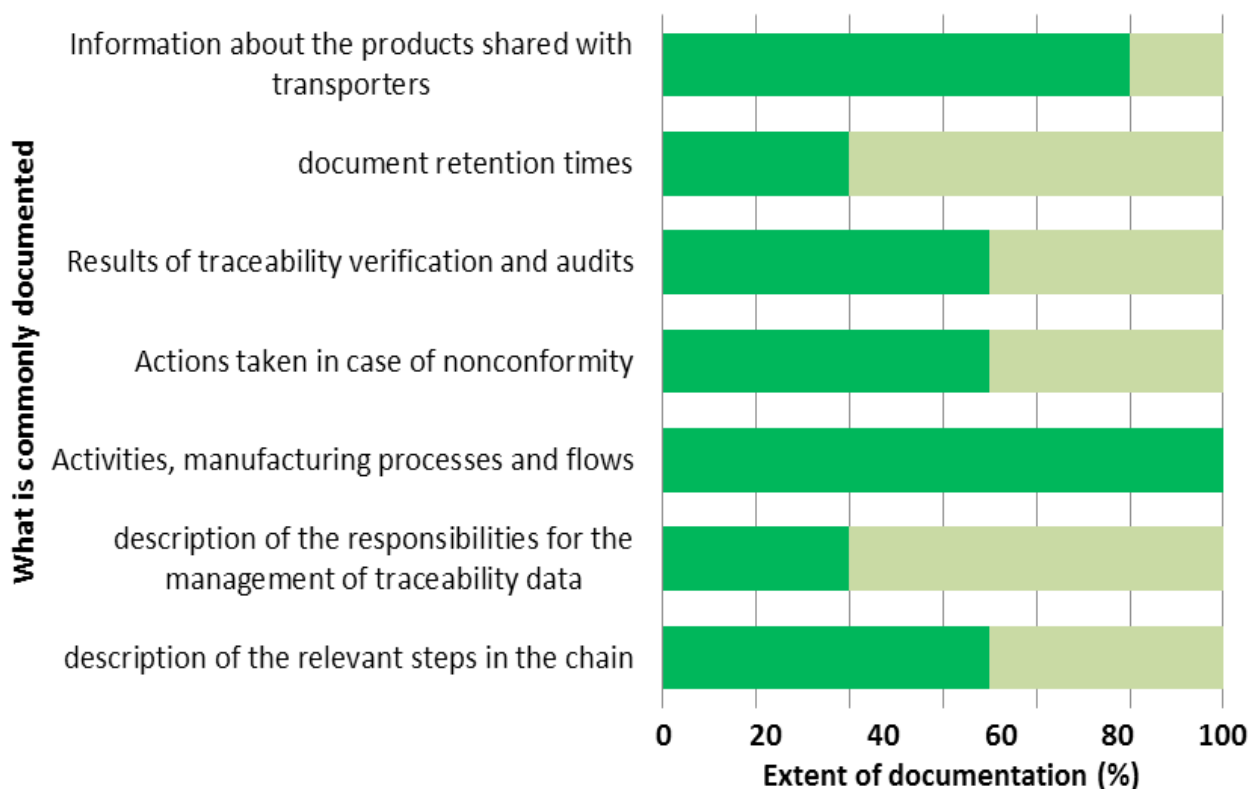


Fig 2. Information commonly documented by farmers and traders

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Conclusions

- Organic products information was fairly shared by actors in the value chain; which show existence of trust.
- Information sharing was dependent on monitoring, certification, and documentation and training.

Recommendations

Enhancing information flow among farmers, traders and consumers requires training on traceability system for improved information sharing and change of perception, attitude and practice. Additionally, monitoring systems with appropriate corrective actions, that is rewards in case of compliance and punishments in case of non-compliance, needs to be implemented.



Partners

Makerere University, Uganda
University of Nairobi, Kenya
Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania
Aarhus University, Denmark
University of Copenhagen, Denmark
International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems (ICROFS), Denmark

Associated partners

National Organic Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU)
Kenya Organic Agriculture Network (KOAN)
Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement (TOAM) Project

Further reading:

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For more information visit:

<http://icrofs.dk/en/research/international-research/progroov/>

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