Assessment of status, perception of weed infestation and methods of weed control adopted by cassava farmers in Kogi state, Nigeria.

Abstract ID: IeCAB011-405

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ABSTRACT

Objective: As a prelude to advancing an appropriate weed management strategy for cassava production in Kogi State, Nigeria, it was necessary to ascertain the weed management practices and weed management knowledge base of the farmers.

Methodology and result: A survey of cassava farmers in fifteen (15) Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Kogi State, Nigeria was carried out in 2008 to study the perception of farmers with regards to weed infestation and control method adopted on cassava farms. The study was undertaken in five LGAs from each of the three senatorial districts of the state. In each LGA, five villages were selected; and in each village, six cassava farmers were selected. Stratified random sampling technique and structured questionnaires were used to sample 450 cassava farmers in the study area. The survey indicated that majority of the farmers were males (73%) and aged between 31 - 50 years (88%). Highest frequency of female cassava farmer were found in

Kogi east (42%) with Kogi central having the highest occurrence of unmarried farmers (21%). Farm size was smaller in Kogi central (< 1 ha) compared with 1 - 3 hectares and 4 - 6 hectares in Kogi west and Kogi east, respectively. Cassava farmers (59%) in Kogi west were better educated than their counterparts in Kogi east (39%) and Kogi central (49%). Majority of farmers (68%) indicated that grasses were the dominant weed species on cassava farms in the state. Manual weeding was the commonest practice (66%) followed by herbicide application (30%). Herbicide used for control of weeds in cassava farms in Kogi State included 'primetra', 'sarosate', 'roundup', 'delsate' and 'touchdown' with 'roundup' (47%) being the most commonly used. Majority of farmers in Kogi State weeded their cassava field three times (63%) manually before the crop attained maturity period.

Conclusion and application of findings: The implication of this study is that farmers in the study area had limited knowledge on the superlative benefit of chemical weed control; thus, need more encouragement to adopt chemical weed control option. Adoption and use of chemical weed control will save cassava crop from early weed interference which could result in considerable yield reduction.

Key Words: *Cassava farmers, Guinea savanna, Survey, Weed management practices.*