

Coffee farming in Kenya: a shift from traditional to new emerging areas

*Mugo Harrison M** (mugohmu@yahoo.com), Shikuku Gabriel W

Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization- Coffee Research Institute, Ruiru, Kenya

Introduction

In Kenya, coffee is the second most important industrial crop after tea and third after horticulture. It is a key contributor to foreign exchange earnings, family incomes, food security and employment to over five (5) million Kenyans. It's mainly grown in 33 counties (**Fig. 3**) both by smallholder (70%) and estate (30%) farmers. The counties growing coffee are clustered into East and West of the Rift Valley. The Counties East of Rift Valley (ERV) are referred to as traditional counties while those West of Rift Valley (WRV) are known to be new emerging counties. Despite the crucial role the coffee sub sector plays, the national annual coffee production has both declined and remained low. To avert this, Kenya has developed a strategy focused on coffee expansion to the new emerging counties and increase in productivity. Hence increased annual national production from 50,000 to 150,000 metric tonnes of clean coffee by year 2027/2028

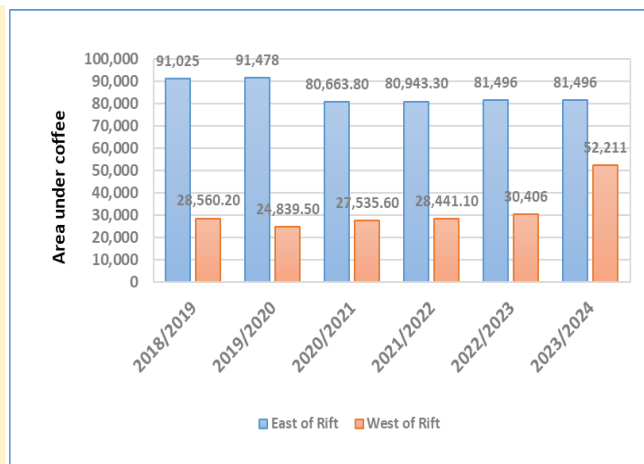


Figure 1: Area under coffee (hectare)

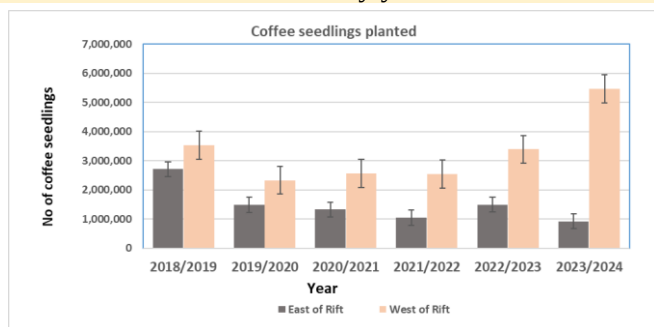


Figure 2: Coffee Seedlings planted by farmers

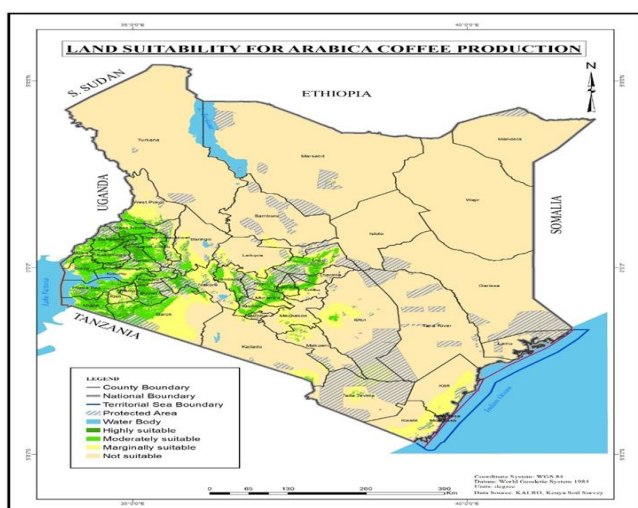


Figure 3: Coffee Growing regions in Kenya

Materials/Methods

A desk review was conducted to establish the achievement of the national strategy for the last six years in area under coffee, coffee establishment, and number of coffee estates and cooperative societies. Other areas reviewed included the clean coffee production and coffee productivity per cluster.

Results/Discussion

The area under coffee: In ERV decreased by 10.5% while in WRV this significantly increased by 109.8% (**Fig 1**).

The number of coffee seedlings: Seedlings distributed for planting in ERV significantly decreased by 65.8% with those WRV significantly increased by 134.7% (**Fig 2**).

The number of coffee estates: Estates ERV remained the same while in WRV they increased from 1095 to 1,151, representing a 5.1% growth.

The coffee Cooperative Societies: In ERV Societies decreased by 3.0% while Cooperative Societies WRV moderately increased by 25.3% during the same period.

Coffee production: On average, ERV produced 33,592,781 kgs of clean coffee per year representing a 75.8% while WRV production averaged 10,729,046 kgs an equivalent of 24.2% of the national annual coffee production.

Coffee productivity per hectare: In ERV this averaged 399.7 kgs per ha compared to 348.6 kgs per ha in WRV.

Conclusion/Perspectives

The strategy to increase coffee expansion to new emerging counties as established is on course. This is anticipated to significantly increase the national coffee production in future resulting into reduced poverty level and increased food security in the country. The coffee productivity both in ERV and WRV is still significantly low (below 400 kgs/ha) with potential of about 1.5 - 2 tonnes per ha an aspect that need further government intervention.

References:

1. Agriculture and Food Authority -Coffee Directorate (2024): Coffee Year book 2023/2024. 100p
2. Agriculture and Food Authority -Coffee Directorate (2020): Coffee Year book 2019/2020. 91p