

Determinants of farmers' adoption of improved cassava and sweetpotato varieties in Sierra Leone

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Abstract. The capacity of most African countries to produce enough food for their people is declining in the face of a rapidly increasing population and civil conflicts leading to dependence on food imports and food aid. Adoption and sustenance of farm technologies that can help enhance food production remain a major challenge for research and development agencies in many African countries. Over the years, the Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR) has made substantial efforts in improving the productivity of small-scale farmers in Sierra Leone through the development of improved technologies. This paper is based on a survey of 280 farmers in six operational zones of IAR in Sierra Leone. The results show that improved cassava and sweetpotato varieties developed by the institute have been adopted not only by farmers who have collaborated with IAR in developing and testing these

technologies, but by other farmers too. The results however indicate that among other constraints, the adoption of the improved varieties is inhibited considerably by limited finance and lack of high yielding and diseasefree planting materials acceptable by both the producers and consumers. The findings further suggest that farmers' religion, marital status, sex, income sources outside agriculture and collaboration in on-farm research are important in influencing adoption and should therefore be taken into consideration by research and development agencies in the promotion of root and tubers crops in Sierra Leone.