

Consumers' Willingness-To-Pay for Underutilized Vegetable Crops: The Case of African Leafy Vegetables in South Africa

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KEYWORDS Demand. Ordered Probit Model. Contingent Valuation. Morogo

ABSTRACT The paper aimed to determine consumer's willingness-to-pay for African leafy vegetables and to explore the socio-economic and perception factors influencing willingness-to-pay for African leafy vegetables in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Cross-sectional data were collected from 300 randomly selected households across three districts of the Limpopo Province using a contingent valuation questionnaire. The descriptive results revealed that almost 80 percent of the respondents would be willing to pay a premium for African leafy vegetables. An Ordered Probit model was applied for identification of households' socioeconomic and perception factors that influence willingness-to-pay. Willingness-to-pay was found to be mainly a function of socio-economic factors, namely gender, urbanization, age, distance to the market, tastes/preferences and availability of African leafy vegetables throughout the year. Demand and preference for African leafy vegetables were found to be high as they have been historically important food security crops to rural households. The empirical results will be useful for African leafy vegetable producers, plant breeders, marketers and policy makers in developing efficient production and marketing strategies. This, in turn, would provide a means of improving food security and livelihoods, especially in support of the rural poor African leafy vegetable farmers.