Njuguna, E.M., Mulwa, R.M., Kaburu, P.K., Mwangi D.M., Murithi, F.M.*

1 KARI Headquarters, P.O. Box 57811 – 00200, Nairobi, Kenya

2 University of Nairobi, P.O. Box 29053 – 00625, Nairobi, Kenya

3 KAPAP Nakuru, P.O. Box 3799-20100, Nakuru, Kenya

*** Corresponding author:** essysays@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

Quality seed and appropriateness of a variety is a vital requirement for ensuring food security especially for the farmers living in the low rainfall areas. In the arid and semi arid areas (ASALs) of Kenya, access of high quality seed is a concern of not only the farmers, but also the government of Kenya and the development agencies working in these areas. This study investigated the sources of various seeds in the ASALs; in this paper, we focus on the sources of beans seed at the household level for the 2008 and 2009 cropping seasons in seven ASAL districts to establish if the KARI Seed Unit improved seeds are reaching the farmers in the ASALs. The most common source of bean seed for the year 2009 was the local market which attracted the highest number of farmers, and also the highest mean amount of bean seed per farmer. The other important sources of bean seed were farmers own seed, agro-vet shops, borrowing from neighbors, and agricultural extension officers. Integrating the local market place and selling high quality seeds while delivering technical messages as farmers do their selling and buying activities would help improve the quality of seeds in the ASALs and this study recommends that this model be tested and validated to exploit its potential.

Key words: Seed, beans, KARI seed unit, ASALs, local market place Kenya.