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The Impact of Agro-tourism on Sustainable Agricultural Production in Rakai Agro-ecological Zone

This research study on the impact of agro-tourism on sustainable agricultural production was carried out in the Rakai district agro-ecological zone. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data from the respondents. The study was majorly guided by three research objectives, which included; examining agro-tourism practices in Rakai agro-ecological zone; to find out the benefits of agro-tourism on sustainable agricultural production in Rakai agro-ecological zone and; to establish the challenges of agro-tourism in Rakai agro-ecological zone. Both primary and secondary data were collected using observation, oral interviews and a questionnaire. This was done because the researcher had a big sample population of 119 which was selected from the farmers who are involved in different agro-tourism enterprises in the study. From the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, the findings revealed that 70% of the people in Rakai agro-ecological zone are involved in agro-tourism as one of their major economic activities and source of income, although they experience so many challenges such as poor market, poor transport zone and limited support from the government. The study concluded that agro-tourism is a good farming practice that builds visiting farmers' experiences, confidence & morale, thus enabling/encouraging farmers to increase their productivity and marketing skills. Enterprise mix is characteristic of most agro-tourism farmers visited (Bananas, coffee, cattle, sheep, poultry, maize beans, Vegetables, fruits, Apiary). Basing on the research findings, the researcher recommended that farmers need more help in the use of indigenous knowledge, synthetic pesticides, chemicals and herbicides to control pests, diseases and weeds respectively; there is need for agro-tourism farmers to access credit from micro-finance institutions at reasonable interest rates. There is need for government support through favourable policies, provision of security and other financial help to be provided among farmers in Rakai agro-ecological zone to boost the agro-tourism sector, improve their well-being and contribute to the development of their area.

Key words: Agro-tourism, Production, Sustainable