Willingness to pay for plant health advisory services: an application of the double-bounded dichotomous choice model.

Plant health clinics (PHCs), currently supported through donor funding, are transitioning to a fee-for-service model to enhance their sustainability. These clinics provide timely and context-specific advisory services aimed at reducing crop losses from pests and diseases. However, the long-term sustainability and viability of PHCs is uncertain due to dwindling donor support and shrinking government funding. This study assessed smallholder tomato farmers' willingness to pay (WTP) for plant health advisory services (PHASs) in Kirinyaga County, Kenya. Data were collected through a multistage sampling procedure using a semi-structured questionnaire administered to 385 respondents. A hypothetical scenario employing a double bounded dichotomous contingent valuation format was used to elicit WTP data. Results from the bivariate probit model indicated that education level, plot size, risk preferences, awareness of PHCs, tomato price, off-farm income, and crop farming diversification significantly increased farmers' WTP, while age had a negative effect. Smallholder tomato farmers were willing to pay an average of 131.72 KES per visit to PHCs. These findings suggest that farmers value PHASs and are willing to invest in them. Therefore, the study highlights the need for flexible pricing models, targeted awareness campaigns, and age-sensitive interventions to promote farmer engagement and ensure sustainable delivery of PHASs.