ABSTRACT

Citrus is a major source of income in Kenya for both large and small scale farmers. However, citrus productivity has been declining over the years mainly due to pests and diseases, particularly the African Citrus Triozid (ACT), Huanglongbing (HLB) and False Codling Moth (FCM). Management of pests and diseases is sorely dependent on synthetic pesticides, which not only increases production costs but also are associated with high health and environmental risks. Use of integrated pest management (IPM) is recommended as a more sustainable alternative to widespread broad-spectrum chemical pesticide application. The International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) and partners proposed an IPM package to address the unrelenting challenge of pests and diseases affecting citrus growers in Africa. Although IPM could be an operational way of shielding the citrus fruits from pests and diseases, there was limited information on knowledge and practices on current management of ACT, HLB and FCM among citrus growers, and on farmer's willingness to pay for a more sustainable alternative such as IPM. This study aimed at filling this gap. Multistage sampling method was used to select the counties, subcounties and citrus growers respectively. Two counties namely Machakos and Makueni where citrus production is predominant were purposively selected and 600 citrus growers chosen randomly for the interviews using structured questionnaires. Descriptive analysis and a contingent valuation method were utilized to document the grower's knowledge and practices on ACT, HLB and FCM and willingness to pay respectively, while a logistic regression model was employed to investigate the factors affecting the willingness to pay for the IPM strategy.