

Socio-economic importance of *Liriomyza* leaf miners of vegetable crops in Tanzania: a study of farmers' knowledge, attitudes and Practices in Arumeru and Moshi-Rural Districts

Beatus J. Mboya

MSc. (Natural Resources Assessment and Management)

University of Dar es Salaam, Department of Natural Resources Assessment, 2012

This study assessed the socio - economic importance of *Liriomyza* Leafminers (LMF) of vegetable crops in Northern Tanzania focusing on farmers' knowledge, attitude and practices towards management of this insect pest in their fields. A total of 117 households were interviewed for primary data collection. Desk study was used for secondary data collection. Findings revealed that majority of respondents were educated up to primary level and lived in households with 1 – 10 individuals and cultivating areas of not more than 3acres. Tomato production ranked the highest (78.9%), followed by cucumbers (29.1%). Vegetables are grown by farmers throughout the year. Respondents from Arumeru district (63.5%) revealed to have little knowledge on the insect compared to 27.7% in Moshi Rural. Interviews with farmers and agricultural officers revealed that the major method of insect control in the study areas was by use of chemical control followed by use of natural enemies. Due to poor farm records keeping it was very difficult to establish the economics of vegetable farming in the study areas. There is also a marketing problem of vegetable products due to much of the same products being supplied to the market at the same time. This is spearheaded by improper planning of the farming calendar, as all farmers in one area grow the same type of crop maturing at the same time. The LMF exists in the area but some farmers are not well aware that it may lead to high vegetable losses because are not affected by most of the pesticides. The study recommends first; sensitization of farmers about LMF and its potential socio-economic impacts and second more participation of field extension officers in the vegetable farms in order to guide farmers on proper use and disposal of pesticides.