

ABSTRACT

Lablab pupureus (L.), is a multipurpose drought tolerant legume which is considered as a minor crop in Kenya, hence, it is underutilized. In Kenya there are few known Lablab genotypes for specific environments. Choice of genotypes to grow is based on colour preference and seed availability, thus low yields are obtained. To assess the status of Lablab production in Kenya, a baseline survey was conducted in Lablab growing localities. A disproportionate stratified sampling was used and a questionnaire was administered to 108 respondents from diverse Lablab growing regions of Kenya. Performance of Lablab genotypes under different environmental conditions was also evaluated. Field trials of forty five (45) accessions of Lablab collected from Rift Valley, Eastern, Coast and Central regions of Kenya were established in three locations with different agro-ecological environments; (Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and Bungoma). The 45 accessions and three environments were factorially combined and replicated three times in a randomized complete block design (RCBD). Results from the survey indicate that most farmers (84.3%) grew Lablab in small acreage of less than 1.0 acre, and only 44.4% of the respondents used the improved Lablab cultivars which were obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture or research stations. Majority (88%) preferred Lablab to common beans and all respondents noted that Lablab fetched more income per unit quantity than common bean. All respondents utilized Lablab dry beans as food. The crop was also utilized as a livestock feed especially during the dry season when no other crops are in the farms by 51.9% of the respondents while 25% used it in conservation agriculture and for soil erosion control. About 20.4% of farmers used the leaves and green pods as vegetables. The study identified accessions that are suitable for different agro ecological zones. In conclusion, Lablab is a crop that is climate resilient and contributes to food security in communities that grow it. It is recommended that dolichos should be promoted in Kenya as a climate change adaptation measure and for enhancing food security.