Abstract

This study examined the extent of agro climate and weather information dissemination and its impact on adoption of climate smart practices among small scale farmers in Kisii County. The study engaged 420 small scale farmers randomly sampled from Kitutu and Nyaribari Chache in Kisii County and 30 key informants, mainly technical officers of agriculture in the area. Both primary and secondary data was gathered through focus group discussions, administration of questionnaires, key informant interviews, observations and desk reviews. The data was analysed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The findings of this study pointed to limited outreach (23.4%), limited skill and knowledge (11%) and low utilization (8.1%) of agro weather information among small scale farmers. The low access, knowledge level and use of agro weather information was attributed to delays in forecasts, weak dissemination of advisories, and limited capacity among extension services and inadequate budgetary support for integration of this information in farming activities. The findings also indicated a positive shift towards adoption of climate smart practices in response to agro weather information among all the farmers who had access. Of the 23.4% who had received information, 22% indicated as having changed their practices. This was affirmed by chi-square test results ($x\ 2=17.677$, df. $=2$, $P=0.000$), which were within the significant level ($p < 0.05$). The study concluded that while agro weather information is crucial in enhancing adoption of climate smart practices and resilience to climate change risks, its access remains low among small scale farmers. The study therefore recommends improved and timely access of this information to small scale farmers through channels that are effective and accessible to them such as vernacular FM Radios and improved extension services. The study also recommends budgetary support, packaging of information into user friendly formats, and affirms and suggests up scaling of participatory process in interpretation and use of agro weather information in farming activities.