

"Summer flowers", the general name given to annual species and bulbous perennials traditionally grown during summer in northern Europe, they include *Ornithogalum saundersie* (commercially known as "Arabicum"), *Alstromeria* spp., *Ornithogalum thyrsoides*, *Erygium* spp., *Cyperus alternifolius*, *Polianthes tuberosa*, *Rumohra abiantiformis* and *Limonium sinuatum*, just to mention a few. The floriculture industry is one of the fastest growing sub-sectors of the horticultural industry in the Kenyan economy. In 2004, floriculture contributed 53.1% of all horticultural export volumes and 57.4% of all horticultural export earnings. The cut flower industry is dominated by large-scale sophisticated outfits, growing mainly flowers in greenhouse. Smallholder contribution to the total earning from the sector has been declining steady, from an estimated 13.5% share of total value of exports in 2000 to an estimated 5.1% in 2004. A study was carried out to analyse the profitability of smallholder flower enterprises and Arabicum was used as a model crop. The two-stage purposive random sampling technique and a structured questionnaire were used to interview 45 farmers in Kiambu, Thika and Murang'a districts. The analysis revealed that most of the farmers had no indication of the return on capital or the amount of capital utilize. Most of the farmers were aware about their day-to-day costs such as labour, fertilizer, and chemical use. Most of these farmers had no information on the market, because the marketing and logistics are handled by a marketing agent, who has the access to the relevant infrastructure. The study concluded that smallholder flower production in Thika and Murang'a districts was not profitable while in Kiambu district the enterprise was profitable with a Benefit cost ratio (BCR) of 0.2 and 1.4 respectively.