

Weed Flora and Weed Control Practices in Coffee (*Coffea arabica* L.) in Ethiopia. A Review

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SUMMARY

Ethiopia is the home of Arabica coffee (*Coffea arabica* L.) in Ethiopia coffee grows at various altitudes, ranging from 550-2750 meters above sea level and under four production systems namely, forest, semi-forest garden and plantation coffee accounting 10, 34, 35 and 21% of the total volume produced respectively. The coffee growing areas characterized with high rainfall and suitable temperatures and edaphic condition encourage the growth of diverse weed species ranging from abundant seed producing annuals, to hard-to-control rhizomatous and stoloniferous perennial grasses and sedges. As a result, coffee yield and quality is seriously reduced and weed control is one of the major cultural operations which entails high cost. Coffee can seriously suffer from weed competition and results obtained from loss assessment studies have revealed that yield loss can reach as high as 65 percent depending on the type and the frequency of weeding operations. According to surveys made hitherto, a total of over 52 species from 8 families was identified. In spite of the divergent ecologies and production systems under which coffee is growing weed control practices are more or less the same in all coffee growing areas and include manual slashing and digging, mulching, shading, cover cropping using leguminous crops and application of synthetic herbicides in coffee production. The advantages of coffee by-products such as coffee husk as mulch for weed control is now well recognized at the research level. Integrated Weed Management (IWM) is however, the most appreciated and recommended practice for controlling weeds in coffee, because it is environmentally sound, economically viable and socially acceptable practice for sustainable coffee production.