



FANRPAN

Policy Brief



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Policy and Institutional Arrangements for Managing Risk for Crop Production and Post-Harvest Handling in Climate Disaster-Prone Areas of South Africa

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Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations are made on the basis of the FANRPAN supported Study:

- The Government should develop risk reduction strategies through increased focus on crop related PHM disasters. Present policies are highly skewed towards addressing human oriented disasters.
- The Government should formulate and implement PHM policies that would solely focus on smallholder farmers and thus avoid neglecting their specific needs and concerns.
- The Department of Environmental Affairs should be restructured. At present it is responsible for several functional areas that focus on climate change and crop production rather than acting as a stand-alone and visible operational unit that could clearly address post-harvest management challenges facing all South African farmers, especially smallholders.
- In order to manage climate related disaster risks for crop production, it is recommended that concerted efforts be directed at campaigns that would inform smallholders about the major factors that contribute towards climate change, principally the greenhouse effect. Such knowledge could be critical in enabling smallholder farmers to be effective practitioners of climate smart agriculture.

Introduction

South African agriculture has undergone substantial structural transformations especially after the establishment of the Union Government in 1910, the promulgation of the Natives Land Act of 1913 and subsequent legislation meant to benefit white commercial farming at the expense of their black counterparts. Prior to the above processes, black farmers had access to land and possessed the necessary farming skills that positioned them to outperform their white counterparts in supplying food to the emerging urban market. However, with the passing of the 1913 Natives Land Act that prohibited black tenant-farming and black people from owning land (and thus congesting them into 13% of marginal land) substantial productive skills were lost. The unprecedented financial and human development support directed at white farmers lead to the emergence of a highly productive commercial farming sector and a cadre of farmers that could compete with the best in the world. In contrast, black small-scale subsistence farmers were forced to farm in climate risk raved marginal areas and their farming skills that passed from generation to generation declined. In an attempt to reverse the plight of the smallholder farmer, the new democratic government, which came to power in 1994, initiated an enabling policy and institutional environment that could effectively contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. The report will assess the impact of the resultant policy environment and institutional arrangement on smallholder crop production and post-harvest management (PHM), especially with a focus on mitigating the impact of climate change risks.

Through the census and surveys conducted by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), the country has developed a comprehensive system of crop production data that covers a long period of time, the latest of which spans from 1970 to 2010. An extract from StatsSA (2012) survey reveals interesting developments in the sector, especially the dominance in producing major country staple foods, i.e. maize and wheat for the local and export markets. However, such data only cover crop production accomplishments of large commercial farmers who are predominantly white. The surveys also revealed continuous decreases in crop land allocation, but increasing productivity as attested by almost constant production levels over the years. This raises two important issues for policy formulation, i.e. re-allocation of released land and factors that contribute to increased productivity. The former could be critical in determination of future land uses while the latter could be pivotal in estimating the extent of atmospheric gas emissions through increased input intensification (such as the use of manure).

While previous censuses had no focus on extracting farming records for smallholder farmers, an attempt was made during the 2011 Statistics South Africa Census to capture basic biographical details of all farming households in the country. The census confirmed the dominance of smallholder farmers, especially in the KwaZulu Natal Province.

Policy and legislation aimed at increasing production by smallholder farmers

While South Africa participates in the formulation of international, regional and national policies that are aimed at impacting on increased crop production by smallholder farmers, successful implementation has either been minimal or is still being pursued. The Land Reform Programme was the first piece of legislation that was aimed at improving black small-scale farmers' crop production in South Africa after independence in 1994. It rested on three legs: Land Restitution to those who were unfairly disposed of their properties, Land tenure reform to those settled on land belonging to others (either farmworkers or residents of communal land) and general redistribution to black people with an interest in farming. The performance of the land reform policy, as a general strategy to return land to the previously disadvantaged, has been dismal with the time-frames shifting from 1998 to 2021 for the distribution of the initial targeted 30% of land. While the restitution sub-programme has generally been successful in restoring lost land to its previous owners, literature is abound with massive failures of restored farms while many claimants opted for cash compensation even in situations where the claimed land could have been restored to the previously dispossessed. Land tenure reform has met with many challenges, including expulsions of labour tenants, invasion of unoccupied or "empty" land by the landless, while land that has been redistributed under the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) has largely been unproductive and plagued by allegations of a misallocation of funds.

The performance of other policies, which were aimed at improving crop production for black farmers, has been mixed. While the intention of the AgriBEE policy was to improve the economic situation facing smallholder farmers, the envisaged balanced scoreboard targets in terms of shareholding, affirmative action and capacity building have not achieved their intended objectives to date. CASP funding through the ILIMA/Letsema project had only reached 70 000 (2012) out of 2.6 million smallholders without any visible improvements in their livelihoods, this being the last comprehensive report that recorded official statistics on the project. The latter project has been affected by a lack of policy impact assessments. The Department of Agriculture, however, reported positive effects on beneficiaries of policies, such as the Integrated Food Security and Nutrition Programme (IFSNP) that has created many job opportunities. While the outcome of the ambitious National Extension Recovery Plan (for empowering extension officers) has not been evaluated, observations on the ground and from key respondents indicate that the productivity of smallholders has remained low.

Policy and legislation aimed at influencing post-harvest handling (PHH)

The SA Post-Harvest Innovation (PHI) Programme is the main policy that seeks to influence post-harvest handling in South Africa. It is jointly administered by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum. The aim of the policy is to develop innovative technologies for the fresh fruit value chain. However, smallholder farmers have derived minimal benefit from this policy as their participation in the export market is very low. Key post-harvest legislations that are particularly formulated for smallholder farmers include the 2012 South African Agro-processing Strategy (SAAS) and the Plant Production and Health sub-programme (both administered by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries). The former is still work-in progress and is anticipated to generate in excess of 100,000 jobs by 2020. The latter, which is aimed at assisting farmers to select appropriate cultivars that would withstand post-harvest challenges, is purported to have benefited more than 2000 smallholder farmers countrywide. It is evident that the focus on smallholder PHM is still largely insufficient, considering that South Africa has in excess of 2.9 million farming households (of which 2.6 million is black and mostly dependent on livestock). The proportion of households using electrical energy was about 85% (a 15% increase from 2001) while that with piped water inside dwellings was 73% (an increase of 41% from 2001).

Institutional arrangements for improving crop production and post-harvest handling (PHH) for smallholder farmers

South Africa has very strong but uncoordinated institutions that have been put in place to manage climate change related risks for crop production and PHH. The institutions cut across government, private, non-government and civic organizations. Key amongst government agencies are those that are focused on implementing climate change response policies Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), developing technologies Department of Science and Technology (DST), providing advisory services (Government Coordinated Committee on Climate Change), ensuring adherence to climate change obligations Department of Science and Technology (CSIR), and overseeing policy formulation and implementation Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF).



Local NGOs (such as the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS)), international organizations (such as Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) and civil society organizations (as the Association for Rural Advancement- ARA) are able to participate in efforts geared towards effective crop production with a focus on smallholder farmers. Specific functions of these organizations include: (i) promoting universal food security (technical support provided by FAO to some beneficiaries of the land reform programme; (ii) empowering communities to engage in land reform activities (Association for Rural Advancement; (iii) conducting research and monitoring of the progress in terms of productivity of land reform beneficiaries and actual progress in achieving the 30% target set as land that should be distributed to blacks (the University of Western Cape's Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies Unit); (iv) coordinating policy research and dialogue (Food, Agriculture, Natural resources Policy Analysis Network - FANRPAN); (v) assuring health of farm workers (Agri-Aids South Africa that has tested and counselled many farm workers for HIV and TB prevalence, especially in the Limpopo Province); (vi) promoting farm management, financing and infrastructural development (African Farmers Union of South Africa); (vii) addressing production challenges facing smallholder farmers through the provision of training services (Agricultural Research Council); (viii) coordinating water research development (WRC); and (ix) conducting general research on smallholder farming (various universities in South Africa). The impact of the above institutions on agricultural production activities of smallholders has largely been impaired by a lack of coordinated efforts both within and outside government and non-government agencies.

On the post-harvest management (PHM) front, South Africa has established an institutional and infrastructural framework that either directly or indirectly assists farmers to

manage their harvested crops. Institutions that provide indirect support, such as in promoting storage, handling, processing and marketing activities, include Grain SA (largely for large-scale commercial farming with the option for minimal extension of membership to smallholder farmers) and the South African Futures Exchange or SAFEX (trading of equity and agricultural derivatives). Direct provision of PHM services includes providing market information through appropriate agencies (governments, traders associations, financial institutions, producers, processors, millers and NGOs). Key to these organisations is the South African Cereals and Oilseeds Trading Association (SACOTA) and various provincial departments of agriculture. As PHM is closely linked to the production of high quality crops, the assistance offered by the above-mentioned organisations is substantially tilted towards the large scale farming sector.

Existing gaps in policy and institutional frameworks

The Study has identified the following key gaps related to crop production and PHM in South Africa: the lack of collaboration between government departments at national and provincial government levels. Minimal inclusion of smallholder farmers and institutions of higher learning into the formulation of policies related to climate change, crop production and PHM of crops. Poor information handling and lack of data on performance of various policies that would lead to determination of whether policies related to climate risk, crop production and PHM are realising their intended goals and objectives. Existing policies and legislation are not regularly revised to ensure their relevance and avoid functional overlaps.



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The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) is an autonomous regional stakeholder driven policy research, analysis and implementation network that was formally established by Ministers of Agriculture from Eastern and Southern Africa in 1997. FANRPAN was borne out of the need for comprehensive policies and strategies required to resuscitate agriculture. FANRPAN is mandated to work in all African countries and currently has activities in 17 countries namely Angola, Benin, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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