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Food Security

By

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Preview

This document draws heavily on research done and published by Aliber, Altman, Baiphethi, Hart, Jacobs and Matshe (Agrekon Vol. 48:4. December 2009)

*The document is organised in seven sections. The **first section** gives a background on food security in South Africa and the importance and commitment to address food security in the country; the **second section** provides an understanding of what the report aims to achieve; the **third section** provides a summary of empirical studies conducted on food security – mostly focussing on issues relating to household food security; the **fourth section** outlines the role of the various departments of agriculture (national and provincial) in addressing household food security, the **fifth section** outlines the scope for further studies; and the **sixth section** concludes by identifying specific challenges relating to food security.*

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Discussion notes on food security

1. Background

The issue of food (in)security has been critical in many parts of the world including South Africa. The right to food is enshrined in international and national law. In South Africa, food security received much attention after 1994 when South Africa became a democratic country. The right to access to sufficient food was embedded in Section 26 and 27 of the South African Constitutional law of 1996. The constitution indicates that every South African citizen has a right to sufficient food and water; and social security. In light of the above, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries was mandated to develop agricultural policies and support programmes to ensure that South African citizens are given agricultural opportunities that will enable them to meet their basic food needs.

In the 2010/2011 financial year food security was reprioritised as one of the top priorities for South African government (State of Nation Address, 2010). This is in line with South Africa's millennium development goal which aims to halve the proportion of people who go hungry over the period 1990 and 2015 and to halve poverty and unemployment by 2014. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)'s major role is, among others, to ensure that opportunities are created to encourage South African citizens to participate in agriculture and produce to reduce food insecurity in the country. The department has since initiated a number of programmes that are meant to contribute positively to food security in the country.

The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) report for 2008 indicates that international estimates of people experiencing chronic hunger increased dramatically over the period 1990 to 2007. According to the report the increase in numbers of chronically hungry people was due to increased food prices worldwide as a result of lower production of staple food around the world such as cereals. The price of oil also contributed to the high food prices in

many parts of the world. Political instability, wars, and lack of agricultural inputs in many parts of African countries, played a role in food insecurity as arable land lay fallow.

2. Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to review literature on food security studies in South Africa and identify gaps that were not covered and recommend future research on how the agricultural sector can contribute significantly to food security in the country.

3. Empirical studies on food security

3.1 Defining food security

Food security is a broad term, which is defined in different ways by a number of organisations around the world. The basic definition of food security is that it refers to the ability of individuals to obtain sufficient food on a day-to-day basis. Internationally food security is defined as the ability of people to secure adequate food. More especially it has been defined by researchers as the access by all people at all times to enough food for an active healthy life (Anderson 1990).

According to the World Food Summit organised in Rome in 1996, food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active life.

The Directorate: Food Security within the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), as well as the Centre for Poverty, Employment and Growth (CPEG) of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) acknowledged that food security has three dimensions namely food availability, food access and food use. Food availability in the definition implies that a country must have sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis at both national and household level. Food access implies the ability of a nation and its households to acquire sufficient food on a sustainable basis. Food use refers to the appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation.

Literature by Anderson (1990) sees it fit to distinguish between food security at national and household level. This distinction is crucial since the approach to assess food security in those levels are not the same. Food security at national level refers to the condition whereby the nation is able to manufacture, import, retain and sustain food needed to support its population with minimum per capita nutritional standards. At community level food security is defined as the condition whereby the residents in a community can obtain safe, culturally accepted, nutritionally adequate diets through a sustainable system that maximises community self reliance. At household level food security refers to the availability of food in one's home which one has access to. In this case, a household is regarded as food secure when the members of the family do not live in hunger or fear of starvation.

The concept of food (in)security is closely linked with the poverty in country. The two concepts are interrelated and to some extent have an influence on one another. In any food security discourse, it is also essential to highlight in a nutshell the plight of poverty in the country. Poverty refers to the condition of not having the means to afford basic human needs such as clean water, nutrition, health care, education, clothing and shelter.

United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) report of 2006 pointed out that food insecurity is closely linked to poverty, income and unemployment. The report reveals that poverty and unemployment have strong relationship with food insecurity and in most cases food insecurity manifest in multiple deprivations. Food insecurity begins with the loss of employment, which in turns leads to a significant degradation in living standard. Living in poverty creates additional challenges which limit the ability for people to search for employment and that contribute to a long term unemployment trap. Lack of income due to unemployment, contribute to food insecurity and leads to socials exclusion problems.

The FAO report (2008) basically echoed the findings in the UNDP report. The report suggested that food insecurity creates a destructive cycle of improvement.

Hart (2009) pointed out that most definition of food security include the phrase "at all times" and as such does not distinguish between different durations and intensities of food

insecurity. Furthermore, food insecurity has a temporal as well as an intensity dimension. Temporal dimension can be chronically (long term or persistent), transitory (referring to short periods of extreme scarcity of food availability and access) as well as seasonal or cyclical. The intensity dimension on the other hand refers to the magnitude of the food gap.

It is also important to have a good understanding of the concepts vulnerability and food insecurity. Vulnerability has an external and internal dimension, and food insecurity has a temporal and intensity dimension (Hart, 2009).

An understanding of these distinctions and dimensions associated with the concept of food (in)security are necessary for policy development and appropriate interventions to address food security issues.

3.2 Food security status in South Africa

South Africa is largely deemed a food secure nation producing enough staple foods or having the capacity to import food, if needed in order to meet the basic nutritional requirements of its population (FAO 2008). Hart *et al* (2009) supported the argument that South Africa seems to be food secure at national level but the same cannot be said about households in rural areas.

The national food self-sufficiency index (Figure 1) clearly illustrates that South Africa is food self-sufficient or nearly self-sufficient in almost all the major food product, with the ability to import shortages when necessary.

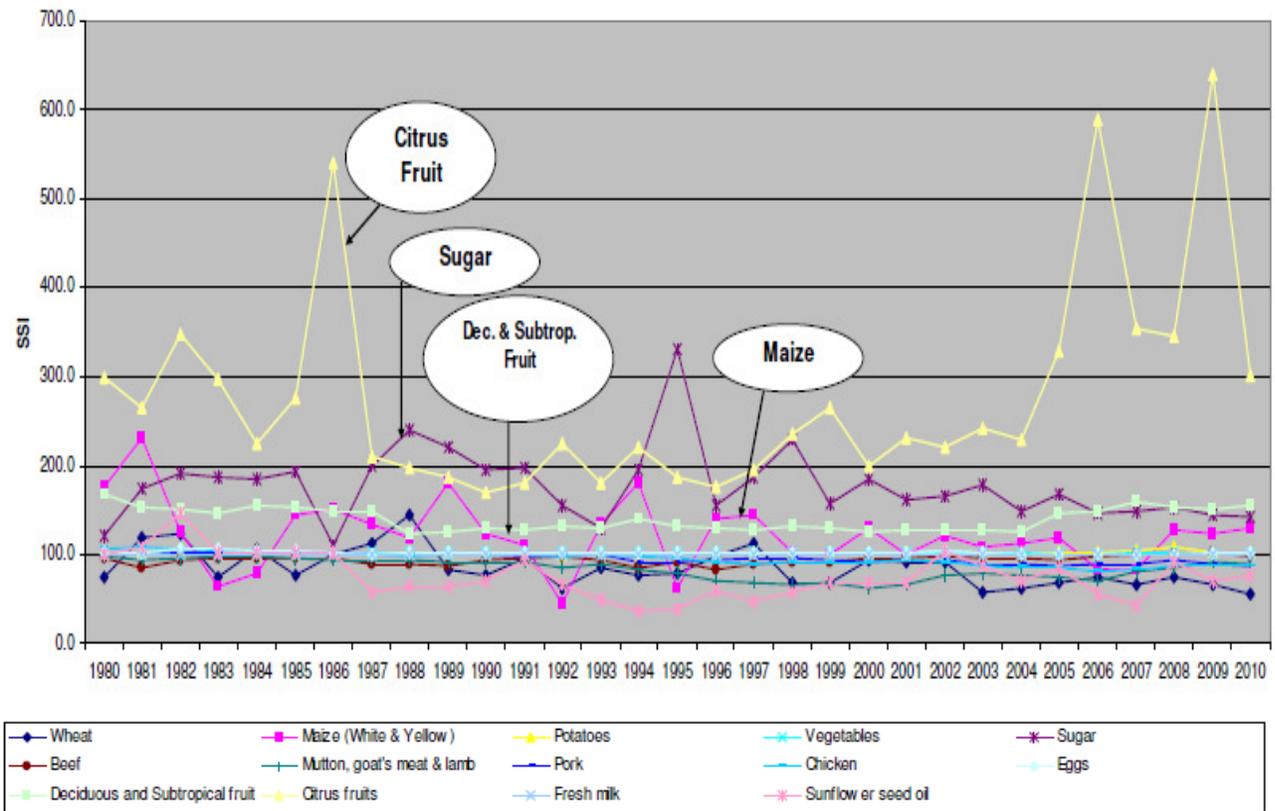


Figure 1: National food self-sufficiency index

Source: Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Figure 2, 3 and 4 demonstrates the food security situation at household level.

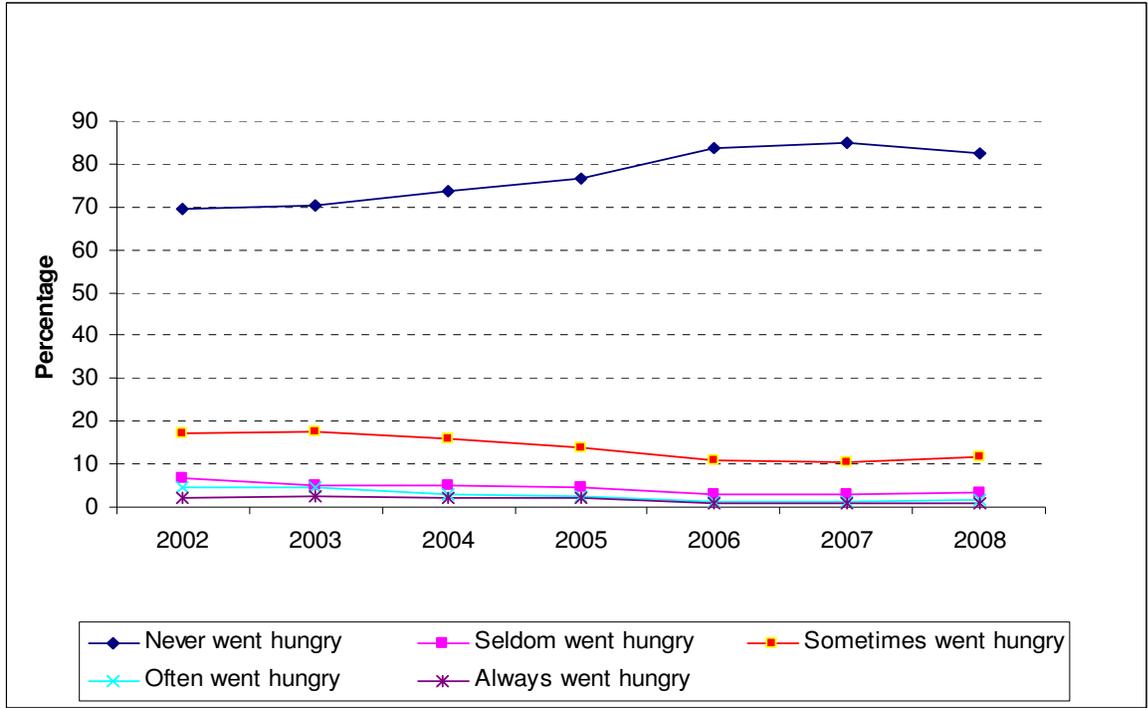


Figure 2: Trends of households that went hunger over the period 2002 to 2008

Source: General household survey (2009) Statistics South Africa

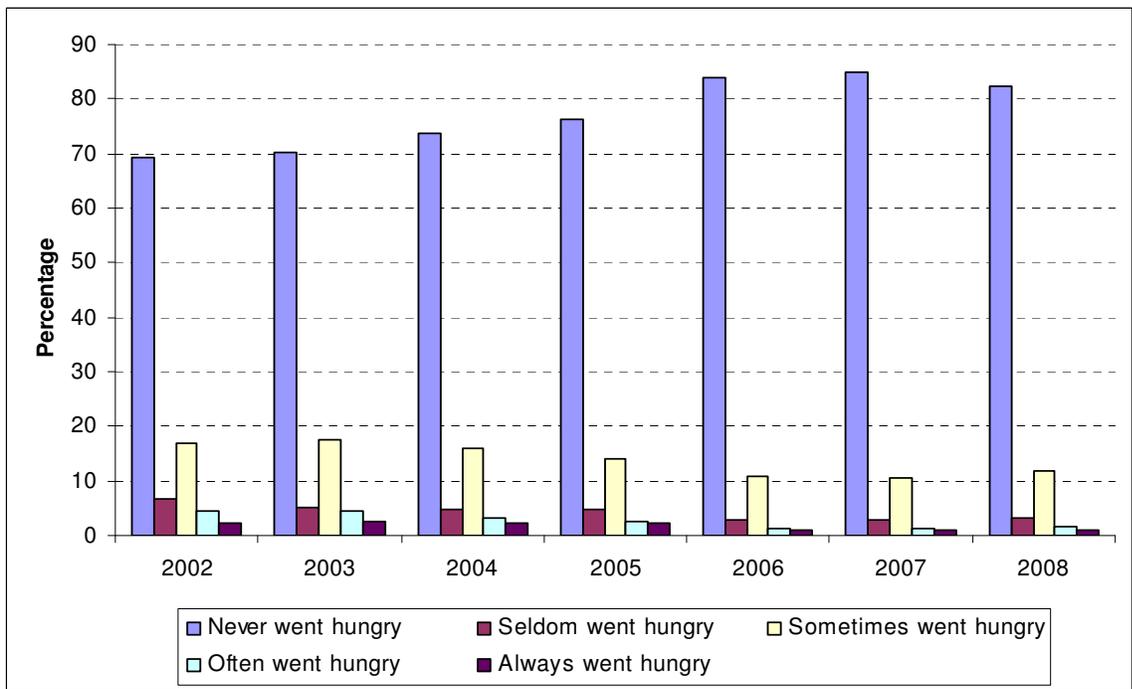


Figure 3: Trends of household food adequacy for South Africa over the period 2002-2008

Source: General household survey (2009) Statistics South Africa

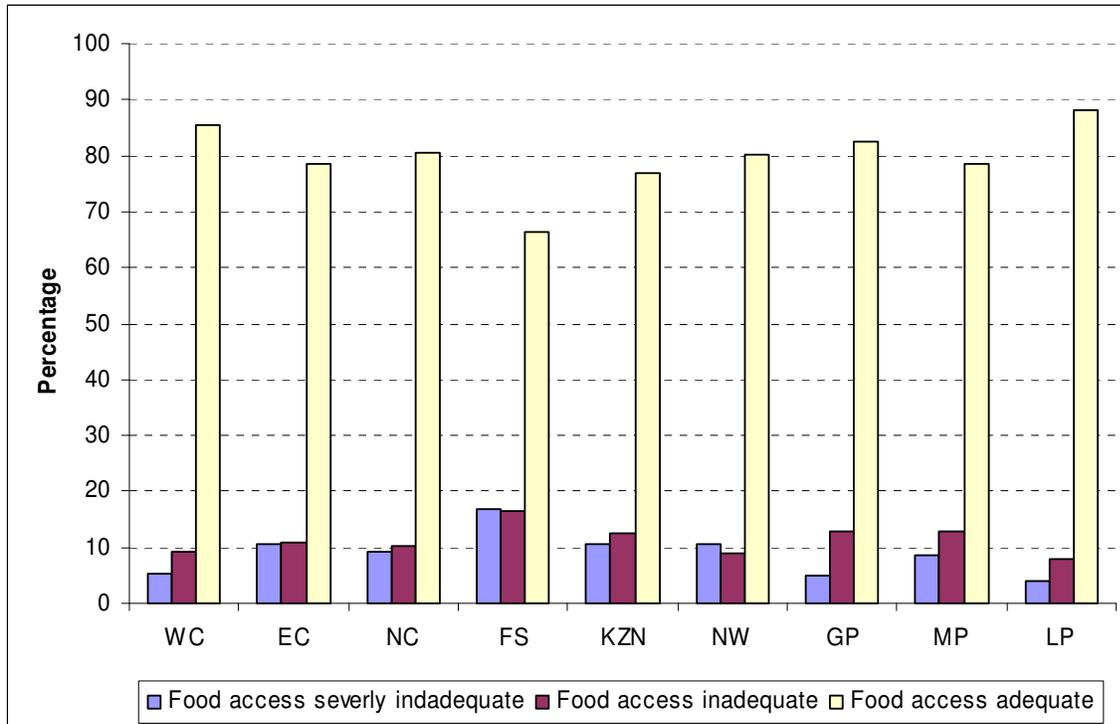


Figure 4: Trends of household food adequacy by province over the period 2002 to 2008

Source: General household survey (2009) Statistics South Africa

Recent survey by Statistics South Africa (General Household Survey, 2009) reported that an estimated 20% of South African households have inadequate or severely inadequate food access. The General Household Survey (GHS) report indicates further that during 2008 food access problems were mostly serious in Free State where 33.5 % of the households have inadequate food access. They were followed by household in Kwazulu-Natal with 23%, Eastern cape 21,4 % and Mpumalanga 21,5 %. Limpopo (11,9 %) and Western Cape (14,5 %) had the least food security problems in 2008. According to the FAO report (2008), high unemployment rate, inadequate social welfare systems and a high HIV/AIDS infection rate have all contributed to food insecurity in the country.

Landman (2004) indicates that food (in)security is a serious challenge that still persists in South Africa after fifteen years of democracy. Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2009) mid year estimates indicate that South Africa had an estimated population of 49 million in 2009 with a population growth rate of 1.7 % per annum. National foods security indicators reveal that South Africa has been able to meet the food needs of its growing population over the

past year. However, there are no clear statistics to ascertain that the food insecurity condition is the same at household level, especially in rural areas of South Africa. Literature by Demetre *et al* (2004), confirm South Africa's national food secure status but suggests that more than 14 million people, or about 35 % of the population in the country are estimated to be vulnerable to food insecurity. It is also reckoned that as many as 1,5 million, or about one quarter, of children under the age of six are to have been stunted by malnutrition. This is supported by Machete *et al* (2004) in his study which confirms that food insecurity is more pervasive in rural areas. According to the report, the majority of poor people are found in rural areas with roughly 75% of those chronically poor.

3.3 Household food security targets and measurement

The South African government has committed itself to halving poverty between 2004 and 2014. One of the critical components in meeting that objective is household food security. The link between poverty, incomes and household food security is, however, not at all clear. While some households are poor they might experience food security by means of own food production.

Hart *et al* (2009) indicates that food security is a broad concept and the meaning and the measurement is not obvious as it may seem. Food security is multidimensional in nature. Accurate measurement and policy targeting, therefore remains a challenge due to many dimensions involved.

According to Anderson (1990) there is sometimes confusion between national food security and household food security. Access to food at household level depends on how food markets and the distribution systems function rather than on total agro-food. At national level Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in particular commercial imports, are used to estimate food security. At household's level, several indicators are used to examine the status of food security.

Jacobs (2009, p.411) came to the following conclusion:

“A food security target depends heavily on indicators and the measurement of food (in)security. Three categories of food security indicators exist with their respective strengths and limitations: food availability indicators focus on national food supply, yet pay scant attention to individual nutritional status; food expenditure and access indicators measure the monetary value of food as a proxy for food consumption, but often exclude individual nutritional status (or other anthropometric measurements); composite indexes incorporate all the available dimensions of food security into a single index, but the weights attached to components of the index might misrepresent their values in practice.”

Hart *et al* (2009) revealed that in South Africa there are no specific and accepted measures of food security and there are no regularised ways of monitoring it. These gaps restrict the ability of policy makers to address food insecurity. They indicated that policy makers are therefore constrained in their ability to identify interventions appropriate to different situations and needs. They further revealed that these challenges are further exacerbated by weak links between government, private sector and the civil society.

Researchers in South Africa are using various methods to assess food security at household's level depending on the objectives and purpose of their study. To mention a few: National Food Consumption Survey (NFCS); Food Insecurity and Vulnerability information and Mapping System (FIVIMS); General Household Survey (GHS); Income and expenditure Survey (IES); Community Survey (CS); South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS); Labour Force Survey (LFS); are some of the national surveys conducted to assess food security status in the country (Labadarios, *et al* 2009). Due to the complexity of food security, these methods yield different results. The South African government policy formulation process is currently informed by the GHS, IES, LFS and Community Survey which are implemented by Statistics South Africa.

3.4 Sources of information about household-level food security

Aliber (2009) gave a perspective on data sources available to be used to get an understanding of household-level food security in South Africa. The two datasets that are used in particular are the General Household Survey (GHS), an annual household survey that began in 2002, and the Income and Expenditure Survey (IES) of 2005/06, Both these surveys are from Statistics South Africa. Although these surveys are not designed for the analysis of household-level food security per se, these datasets have some value in respect of understanding food security.

The GHS reveals trends in the experience of hunger over time, lays the basis for probing where the experience of hunger remains most problematic and provide some basis for targeting future food security or poverty reduction interventions, both in terms of type of household and geographically. The IES 2005/06 contributes to an understanding of household-level food security in different but complementary ways, most significantly by providing measures of the extent to which the poor spend their income on food.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), also makes use of these two data sets. To get a perspective on the availability of food for households DAFF also includes statistics on the percentage households that received support from the department and other organisations as documented in the Integrated Food Security and Nutritional Programme's (IFSNP) Comprehensive Report.

Alemu (2010) based his measurement of household food security on undernourishment. According to the South African Medical Research Council an individual is classified to be food insecure if he/she receives less than 2261 kilocalories per day. By translating this in economic terms this represent the recommended daily allowance (RDA). This is, according to Statistics South Africa, R 211 per person per month expressed in 2000 prices.

3.5 The role of agriculture

A FAO report (2004) emphasised that agriculture is a key to food security in many parts of the world. The report indicates further that agriculture contributes to poverty alleviation by reducing food prices, creating employment, improving farm income and increasing wages. Making agriculture work must be central component of policy approaches to food insecurity reduction and increasing economic growth. Increased investment in agriculture will help redress the current inequalities. Empowering people to grow their own food for subsistence or income generation will provide nourishment and potential income to many people in the country.

According to the FAO report (2004), experience from other countries indicates that a comprehensive approach to the provision of support services to achieve growth in the smallholder agricultural sector is essential. In the absence of appropriate farmer support programmes, smallholder farmers will have little chance of escaping poverty and agriculture's role of creating livelihood opportunities will remain limited.

The 2008 FAO report re-iterated that agriculture is considered as one of the sectors that can play a significant role towards food security in the country. This report stated that the majority of people were in direct need of food especially in rural areas. The report furthermore revealed that the majority of people living in rural areas had access to land but lacked the necessary skills and access to recourses to farm sustainably.

A survey released by Eskom in 1998 indicates that there were 2.1 million small scale and emerging farmers in South Africa. The Strategic Plan for South Africa Agriculture 2007 reveals further that there were approximately 240 000 black farmers in South Africa who provided livelihood for more than a million family members as well as temporary employment to 500 000 people. It further confirmed that approximately 3 million small scale farmers produce food primarily to meet their household consumption needs (Aliber and Hart, 2009).

Land distribution is one of the areas vital to address food insecurity in South Africa (FAO, 2008). Addressing the disparity of land distribution is considered a crucial towards reducing food insecurity in the country. Around 17.1 million hectares is owned by black farmers of which only 2.6 million of that land is suitable for agricultural production.

According to FAO (2008), the challenge in South Africa is predominantly around access to food and means to produce it. The report further indicates that black South Africa make up the majority of poor and food insecure households which are mostly found in rural areas. Factors such as lack of access to finance, communication infrastructure, education, skills development facilities and agricultural inputs still prevents South African from making a substantial progress in farming.

3.5.1 The contribution of subsistence agriculture

There is a general consensus that households access food mainly through three sources namely markets, subsistence production and transfers from public programmes or other households (Ruel *et al* 1998).

Studies in this regard also revealed that, historically, rural households produced most of their own food, whereas urban households purchased most of their food. This has changed over time. Studies by Maxwell *et al* (1998) and Ruel *et al* (1998) indicated that the dependence for both urban and rural households has increased.

While farming still remains important for rural households, people are looking for diverse opportunities to increase and stabilise their income (Baiphethi and Jacobs, 2009). As far as smallholder or subsistence/ semi-subsistence agriculture and food security are concerned, Baiphethi and Jacobs (2009, p.472) made the following statements:

“Until recently, South Africa has been self-sufficient in food production, at least at the national level” and,

“While the country is self-sufficient in food production, this has been accompanied by considerable levels of household food insecurity. Reliable statistics of a national

average proportion of households which are vulnerable to food insecurity and/or suffer from food poverty is still a question of debate. The majority of poor households are concentrated mostly in the rural areas, especially in the former homelands. Since the majority of the poor reside in rural areas, it is possible that the food insecure households are also in these areas. If this is the case, it is expected that agriculture will play an important role in alleviating poverty, as the rural development literature suggest.

An estimated 4 million people in South Africa are engaged in smallholder agriculture. The most common reason is that their involvement in agriculture is seen as the provider of the main source of food, or purely for subsistence. Though the people engaged in agriculture as main or extra source of income is small, it is consistent over time. A specific problem though, is that there are no credible long term national data that establish the contribution of subsistence/ smallholder agricultural sector to food security.

Aliber (2005) pointed out that the household survey data indicate that agriculture contributes 15 % of the total household income of black households with access to agricultural land. For the poorest quartile the contribution stands at 35 %. Aliber (2009), however, pointed out that case studies indicate a decline in agricultural activities in the former homelands, with the common reason the removal of support that farmers in former homelands used to receive from pre-1994 governments.

3.5.2 Should subsistence agriculture be supported?

Aliber and Hart (2009) put the question whether subsistence agriculture should be supported as a strategy to address rural food insecurity. They concluded that given the large number of people involved in this type of production, they require adequate support. Subsistence production not only contributes directly to these households' food security as a supply of food, but also enables households to divert income to meet other requirements.

The complexities involved in subsistence agriculture illustrate the challenges involved in trying to support agricultural production in such contexts. It should be determined if the

current support being offered takes into account the complexities faced by subsistence agriculture in the various areas.

Against this background Aliber and Hart (2009) concluded that current support at best benefits a very small number of households, typically those with access to water for irrigation purposes. Policy support should consider:

- That more evidence, and thus further research in a number of diverse contexts within which subsistence farmers engage in agriculture should be conducted to determine the nature of support required in different contexts;
- Promotion of different crops and livestock which can enrich people's diets need to be considered;
- More attention should be given to the seemingly marginal conditions in which black farmers practice subsistence agriculture to avoid deterioration of current production capabilities;
- The provision of appropriate support to farmers, not only to improve the quality and quantity of outputs, but also to allow innovative farmers to move from subsistence to more commercial and market orientated production.

Matshe (2009) provided ideas on some approaches to boost smallholder production for food security. This is based on evidence from studies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This article pointed out that many of the world's hungry are smallholder farmers and that food insecurity is closely linked to the livelihood strategies of these farm households. Furthermore, food insecurity is linked to livelihood assets, strong institutional support and a favourable external environment. Policies and strategies to increase agricultural productivity can make a significant contribution towards reducing households' food insecurity status.

4. The role of the Departments of Agriculture – National and provincial.

The integrated food security strategy document for South Africa (July 2002) amongst others identified specific challenges and priority areas for food security. Specific challenges identified in the document are:

- Inadequate safety nets;
- Weak institutional support networks and disaster management systems;
- Inadequate and unstable household food production;
- Lack of purchasing power; and
- Poor nutritional status

The strategic document also specified specific priority areas for food security, namely:

- Increase household food production
- Increase food trade and distribution
- Increase income opportunities
- Improve nutritional status
- Enhance institutional support networks

The strategic objectives to address these food security challenges are to:

- Increase household food production and trading;
- Improve income generation and job creation opportunities;
- Improve nutrition and food safety;
- Increase safety nets and food emergency management systems;
- Improve analysis and information management system;
- Provide capacity building;
- Hold stakeholder dialogue.

4.1 The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

It is evident that the Departments of Agriculture (national and provincial) can and should contribute towards addressing some of these challenges.

The integrated food security strategy document for South Africa (July 2002) serves to guide the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' efforts to contribute towards addressing food (in)security in South Africa.

To do so the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has implemented a new structure on the 1 April 2011. Within the new structure food security issues will be the main focus of the Chief Directorate: Food Security, which is further subdivided into three directorates, namely, Subsistence Farming, Small-Holder Development and Infrastructure Support. The Directorate: Subsistence Farming will amongst other develop and promote national policy and standard for household food security.

The Chief Directorate has developed a Zero Hunger Strategy which is still under discussion. The strategy is aimed at combating hunger and its structural causes, which continues to perpetuate inequality and social exclusion. It is aimed at more than just creating food secure provinces for all in South Africa. It also strives to put an end to hunger. Upon approval of the strategy, the Directorate: Subsistence Farming will oversee the implementation of the strategy.

Some of the objectives of the Zero Hunger Strategy are to;

- To provide an effective mechanism for the coordination and collaboration of national, provincial and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) inputs and resources in the pursuance of the common goal of increasing household food security and rural development.
- Ensure the establishment of effective support structures for famers through capacity building and institutional strengthening for their improved participation.
- To demonstrate opportunities for diversification and increasing income through the production of vegetables, small stock and small scale aquaculture.
- To build an effective capacity at local level through intensive training and access to information that will provide effective support servicers to the farming communities.

- To evaluate the impact of the interventions, to identify gaps and quantify any constraints that still need to be addressed and make recommendations for extending pilot activities into a broader development initiatives

The basic intention is to develop programmes and strategies at national level with implementation at Provincial and local government level. In this regard the DAFF practically supports these programmes.

Another initiative within the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is the development of a production strategy for South Africa. The driver of this initiative is the Chief Directorate: Agricultural Production. This strategy seeks to position primary agriculture by targeting subsistence, smallholder and commercial production, for the purpose of improving national food safety and security, agricultural economic output in a profitable and sustainable manner, through qualitative and quantitative improvement of South Africa's agricultural productivity, production efficiency, trade and regulatory environment for all commodity groups. It furthermore seeks to stimulate rural economic growth and development. The strategy identifies five pillars of food security i.e. food availability, affordability, stability of supply, access and utilization. It also suggests specific policy interventions, amongst others:

- to improve the entry levels of smallholder farmers into commercial agriculture and to create space for smallholder farmers to grow their businesses;
- To identify food insecure communities through knowledge and information management systems, able to provide continuous and updated analysis of the state of food insecurity at a national, provincial and local level.;
- To ensure qualitative and quantitative production of principled food commodities within identified food insecure communities;
- where South Africa are able to produce efficiently and sufficiently that the domestic market does not strain under farmers decision to export, and at the expense of national food security
- ensure the profitability of production of identified priority commodities, in this way ensuring farmers are always to gain from the production of principled food commodities; and

- to ensure that food prices and food affordability are not compromised at the expense of the above mentioned factors.

A specific programme that was introduced and managed by DAFF is the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP). The aim is to provide effective agricultural support and to streamline the provision of services to the targeted different levels of clients within the farming continuum. The need for CASP flows from the recommendations of the Strauss Commission report, which recommended the financial “sunrise” subsidies, and the adoption of a “sunrise” package of enabling conditions for the beneficiaries of the land reform programme who require loan finance. The purpose of the comprehensive agricultural support programme is therefore to establish financing mechanisms, referred to as “sunrise” subsidies and to streamline and align service delivery within the three spheres of government by creating enabling conditions for beneficiaries through the “sunrise” package. The execution of the programme is at provincial level who prepare and submit a budget annually to give effect to the objective of the CASP programme. The programme deliverable is the financing mechanism and the alignment of support services that promote, support and facilitate agricultural development of targeted levels of clients within the six defined areas of support. The majority of the above mentioned are currently being addressed and the challenge that remains are the adequate financing, coordination of services and roll out plan. According to the conditions of the programme 10 % of the budget allocation to Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDA) should be directed to food security programmes. The budget should also include a specific amount to support skills development of farmers and extension officers.

4.2 The Provincial Departments of Agriculture and local government

Pushing the national agenda to address food security at local community level is the responsibility of the provincial and local governments. It is at this level where the execution of national objectives takes place through, amongst others, appropriate problem identification, targeting and technical advice and support.

5. Scope for further research

Much has been done in the country with regard to food (in)security. However, the majority of studies focus on poverty and food insecurity in general and not much has been done to link the two with agriculture.

The other area that needs further investigation is the impact of bio-fuel on food security. Since crops that were once grown for human consumption could also be used for bio-fuel. The impact of this must also be researched to determine its effect on food security and food prices. Does it contribute to high food prices of staple food such as maize? What hectares in the country are used for production of bio-fuel as compared to production of crops for human consumption?

The South African biofuels industrial strategy was approved by cabinet in 2006 after consultation with stakeholders. The main objective of the national biofuels industrial strategy is, amongst other to address issues of poverty and economic development. This will be achieved among others, by the promotion of farming in areas that were previously neglected. Specific crops are included for biofuels production, while other crops are excluded based on food security concerns.

It is said that agriculture plays a vital role in poverty alleviation by reducing prices, creating employment and improving farm income and wages for farm workers. These areas also need to be investigated to determine whether agricultural jobs that are created through agriculture have a positive impact to food security since most jobs in agriculture are seasonal and not sustainable employment like in other sectors.

Since there are a number of methods used to assess food security in the country, it is essential to determine specific methods that can be adopted by agriculture to determine the impact of agricultural contribution to food security.

The role of agriculture towards food security reduction has not been fully addressed in the literature. There is a need for further studies to determine the role that agriculture can play

in food security reduction by investigating the impacts of agricultural project that have been initiated over the past years. Since the Department of agriculture has invested heavily in a number of agricultural projects at community and household level. It is of utmost important to carry out follow up studies to determine the economic impact from agriculture point of view.

6. Challenges

- More evidence, and thus further research in a number of diverse contexts within which subsistence farmers engage in agriculture should be conducted to determine the nature of support required in different contexts;
- Promotion of different crops and livestock which can enrich people's diets need to be considered;
- More attention should be given to the seemingly marginal conditions in which black farmers practice subsistence agriculture to avoid deterioration of current production capabilities;
- The provision of appropriate support to farmers, not only to improve the quality and quantity of outputs, but also to allow innovative farmers to move from subsistence to more commercial and market orientated production.
- How to motivate those who have access to agricultural land to fully utilise the land.
- How best to reach the land users with regard to technical and economic advice to increase the productivity of land use given the current status of the departments' advisory services.
- How to adjust land use systems (and or value adding techniques) by subsistence farmers to overcome seasonality in crop production, especially crops with a short shelve live span.
- How to deal with vulnerability of the rural poor due to droughts, price hikes, job shedding, etc.
- Against the background of the current performance on new entrants in commercial farming, how to ensure that the land reform initiatives do not have a negative impact on national food security and as such food prices.

- The DAFF's responsibility is to provide leadership with regard to policies and strategies, which includes national norms and standards. What should be done at national level to address poverty and food insecurity?

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