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CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS FACING EMERGING FARMERS IN NORTH WEST PROVINCE, DR KENNETH KAUNDA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY – VENTERSDORP LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, SOUTH AFRICA

Olebogeng David Daw and Teko Gaanakgomo
Department of Economics, North West University (Mafikeng Campus), E-mail: David.Daw@nwu.ac.za

Abstract: The purpose of the paper is to understand the challenges and constraints that impede emerging farmers in the Ventersdorp Local Municipality from being incorporated into the mainstream agriculture, and make an effort to find ways that would assist emerging farmers within the municipality area in developing their operations into viable and profitable businesses that would enable them to participate in commercial agricultural sector, and becoming the engine for economic growth.

After an extensive literature study, personal interviews were conducted with emerging farmers producing the selected commodities. Face-to-face interviews were considered the relevant method for data collection in this study. Interviews were primarily aimed at understanding the current status of the emerging businesses, their challenges, constraints and needs which would in turn inform intervention strategy suitable for revamping and improvement of farming enterprises.

The Microsoft Excel programme was used to analyse and present data collected. This programme allowed the researcher to analyse and describe data. The programme was used to analyse the factors that influence success and limitations of emerging farmers in participating in the mainstream agricultural sector.

Keywords: Emerging Farmers, Agriculture, Economic Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature review was conducted to provide a theoretical background to study and empirical research that has been carried out in the study of emerging farmers. The literature review focuses on understanding how emerging farmers work, and the challenges and constraints they face in their quest of entering the mainstream agricultural economy. The review aims at determining the root cause of failure among emerging farmers, and recommending measures to prevent failure and to ensure that future emerging farmers do not face the same pitfalls. After an extensive literature study, personal interviews were conducted with emerging farmers producing the selected commodities. Interviews were primarily aimed at understanding the status quo of the farming businesses, their challenges, constraints and needs which would in turn inform intervention strategies suitable for revamping and improving farming enterprises.

This entails formulation and promotion of a regional farming guidance improvement plan, which will assist emerging farmers in revamping and improving of their enterprises. This intervention is aimed at enabling emerging farmers to enter into reliable and sustainable value chains. It is envisaged, that subsequent to the intervention, Ventersdorp emerging farmers will be able to develop their farming enterprises into viable commercial entities, which will consecutively become a source of sustainable income and employment for their respective communities.

1.1. Definition of Emerging Farmers

For the purpose of this study, emerging farmers are defined as individuals or group who are slightly more advanced than the smallholder farmers and holds more production assets, but struggles to scale up production, and has difficulty in accessing markets, and have the desire to commercialise their production. Emerging farmers from Ventersdorp Local Municipality, within Dr Kenneth Kaunda were chosen as a case study to be investigated for the purpose of this study, the targeted population was randomly sampled from different agricultural categories such as crop farming, livestock farming and vegetable farming.

The geographical location is Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality in the North West Province, in the Republic of South Africa. The Dr Kenneth Kaunda DM is situated at the southern part of the North West Province and borders both Gauteng and Free State Provinces. The municipality consists of four local municipalities. Tlokwe City Council, City of Matlosana, Maquassi Hills and Ventersdorp. Between 2006 and 2009 the district municipality was comprised of five local municipalities which included Merafong City Council, which has since been re-demarcated back to Gauteng Province. The Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development (READ)'s database of farmers was used to access the emerging farmers in the selected area. Extension officers from the READ's were used as the initial contact people when visiting emerging farmers that was interviewed.

1.2. Agriculture in North West Province

Livestock and grain production accounts for the large percentage of the agricultural production practices in the province. The dry western part of the province is home to beef and game ranching and hunting with Vryburg, Stella and surrounding areas being classified as the region with the most suitable natural resources base for cattle heard in the world found at Stella and Vryburg. The areas are covered by sweet veld, which means farmers within the area will be inclined to planting hay or silage which is a major cost saving as machinery is expensive. Animals are less prone to diseases than in higher rainfall areas of the country. Other livestock productions enterprise, such as sheep, goats and pigs are practiced throughout the Province. The province is also an important food basket in South Africa. North West Province is major producer of maize, wheat and sunflower in the country. About one third of South Africa's maize comes from the Province, as does its 15 percent of wheat.

1.3. Contribution of Emerging farmers to the economic development

Farming in South Africa is major economic activity and in turn contributes greatly to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Farming in South Africa is not just an economic activity but it is rather a way of life in a broader sense. Agricultural sector continues to be a fundamental instrument for sustainable development and poverty reduction in South Africa. Agriculture is evolving and changing, and consequently our efforts to define it are becoming more difficult. It could be argued that agriculture sector has changed from strictly production agriculture and has evolved to also include input supplier, processors, and marketers and often wholesalers and retailers of agricultural products. The agricultural sector has strong economic and employment linkages with the other sectors of the economy, thus contributing substantially to economic growth. Agriculture makes essential inputs into other manufacturing industries through forward and backward linkages. Literature suggests that, the successful growth of farming activities allows for the growth of other business activities through forward and backward linkages. It provides a strong backbone and support to other sectors in the economy. In general, it could be argued that the trade and social activities of rural towns and service centres such as Ventersdorp, Lichtenburg, Wolmaransstad, Vryburg and Zeerust are reliant on primary agriculture and related activities such as agro-tourism and game farming. Agriculture can be seen as an economic bridge between rural and urban areas. Agriculture provides food, work and natural resource services to urban dwellers. Farmer's production of cash crops, provides incomes to farmers to those they employ as labourers and to those who process and transport the crop, as well as export earnings. Income generated from farming activities by farmworkers, farmers and their families contributes to the economic growth, when they spend their wages and salaries on consumer goods and services. The agriculture sector also contributes towards employment creation and provides income for thousands of commercial farmers, emerging farmers, hawkers and street vendors. Most importantly, agriculture contributes directly to household nutrition and food security of both urban dwellers and rural households, and also keeps food prices relatively low and avoids the need for large scale food imports.

2. BACKGROUND

In general, it could be argued that globalisation of markets offers opportunities for economic growth especially for developing economies such as South Arica. However, such opportunities and corresponding benefits do not always reach emerging farmers in developing countries who fail to participate in international supply chains. Challenges and constraints faced by emerging markets, is the result of lack of access to lucrative and sustainable markets due barriers of entry, whilst they have access to agricultural resources such as land and water.

Participation in both national and international food chains is increasingly dependent on guarantees for safety as a bottom line and food quality as a competitive edge. Developing economies and emerging farmers in particular, must comply with increasing stringent food safety standards to access local and international markets (Jari and Fraser, 2009). Those few emerging farmers who gain access into the mainstream agricultural markets find themselves in a steep learning curve, because processors and retailers have stringent procurement policies such as international quality standards, labelling, growing programs, marketing agreements and exclusive contractual arrangements. Often these arrangements are only concluded with large commercial farmers (mainly white), who have in their possession large land holdings, sufficient knowledge and technology available and are connected to markets (Jari and Fraser, 2009). Whereas emerging farmers struggle to meet the requirements stipulated by retailers/buyers, such as pack-house, cold room, silos, auction pans, abattoirs, full product traceability and soil and water analysis in order to produce the desired quality and quantity of products (Baloyi, 2010).

Supermarkets are able to impose their supply chain requirements onto suppliers because they are increasingly the most important gatekeepers of consumer's retail markets. Over the years the big four supermarkets such as Pick n Pay, Shoprite, SPAR and Woolworths have increased their number of stores and total retail space (Van der Heijden and Vink, 2010). The bargaining power associated with the big four supermarkets allows them to pass cost such as those associated with labelling and transport back to suppliers and thus protecting their margins. This increases costs and risk of farming, and supermarkets only want to deal with those who are willing and able to carry these cost. Most of South African supermarkets use centralised and vertically integrated procurement systems, focused around their own distribution centres and relatively small number of preferred suppliers (Van der Heijden and Vink, 2010). Woolworths buys only from relatively small number of suppliers, whereas Pick n Pay buys largely from small number of preferred producers, supplemented by outside purchases if necessary. On other hand, Shoprite uses its own in-house category manager (Freshmark) to purchase from a relatively large number of preferred suppliers, and supplemented where necessary. When identifying their preferred suppliers, supermarkets will look for those who can guarantee sufficient volumes and consistent quality (Van der Heijden and Vink, 2010). The current structure of the South African food retail sector and procurement practices of local supermarkets have effectively created barriers to entry for emerging farmers. Even niche markets such as organic produce, often presumed to offer opportunities for smallholders and emerging are being taken by commercial producers (Van der Heijden and Vink, 2010).

These costs associated with compliance, lead to exclusion of many emerging farmers from participating in these formal markets, where standards are important, often requiring major structural changes in production practices and processes and also require access to information (Jari and Fraser, 2009). This is an area where most farmers are handicapped in general, and emerging farmers in particular. In general, it could be argued that most emerging farmers face difficulties in marketing their produce due to lack of market information or knowledge. Access to marketing information influence marketing channel choices amongfarmers. It can be argued that marketing information is important because it provides knowledge on the type and quantity of produce required in the market, their quality and the price at which they will be sold. Availability of information allows emerging farmers to comply with retailers' standards, to compete with commercial farmers and produce the desired quality and quantity of products because they have access to the necessary and relevant market knowledge (Makhura, 2011). The above mentioned factors, reduce emerging farmer's incentives to participate in formal markets and make a meaningful contribution towards economy (Jari and Fraser, 2009).

Given these changes in the South African agricultural sector, this is an opportune time to understand the environment in which emerging farmers work, as well as the challenges and opportunities they face in their quest of entering the mainstream agricultural economy.

2.1. Agricultural landscape in South Africa

The government of South Africa has for many decades tried to change the face of farming so as to accommodate farmers from all walks of life, especially those who were previously disadvantaged, and facilitate their entry into the mainstream agricultural economy. The process of integrating emerging black farmers into the mainstream agricultural sector, has not been a smooth one and it has been one that has received a lot of criticism. Nearly two decades after the first democratic elections in South Africa, the agriculture and agribusiness landscape of the country are still under transformation. Baloyi (2010) points out that, the landscape is complex and filled with legacies of a racially and economically divided past and challenges of the present (Baloyi, 2010). According to Barrow and Van Dijk (2013), rough distinction can be made between large scale commercial farmers, emerging farmers, and small scale farmers in South Africa (Barrow and Van Dijk, 2013). The commercial farmers often have large land holdings, sufficient knowledge and technology available and are connected to markets. On the other hand small farmers lack these assets and produce mainly for their own consumption instead of producing for markets. The emerging farmers is slightly more advanced than the smallholder farmers and holds more production assets, but struggles to scale up production, and has difficulty in accessing markets (Barrow and Van Dijk, 2013). Emerging farmers have difficulty participating in markets because of constraints and barriers. Major challenges include insecure land rights, limited access to factors of production, finance and information, limited government support, investment, working capital, insufficient farm size, inadequate or damaged infrastructure, poor farm management, high competition in the industry, knowledge and education about farming (Baloyi, 2010 and Obi, Van Schalkwyk and Tilburg, 2012). Despite the challenges and barriers faced in entering this sector, this new group of historically disadvantaged individuals have and continue to enter this historically white dominated formal value chain. They are driven by their own ambitions and supported by several transformation initiatives by government, as these emerging farmers generally do hold potential to contribute towards economic growth.

According to Senyalo, Chaminuka, Makhura, Belete (2009), this group of emerging farmers currently constitutes a major part of what is referred to as the secondary economy in agriculture. Emerging farmers continue to face the dual realities of a highly commercialised and industrialised commercial farming sector coexisting with this emerging sector. This dualism is no different from that encountered in agriculture in virtually and country. The difference in South Africa is that large commercial farming operations are predominantly white owned and emerging farming operations are predominantly black owned. This concept of dualism system has created unequal distribution of land, economic assets, support services, infrastructure and income markets access including exclusion of emerging farmers from the lucrative agricultural supply chain (Antwi and Seahlodi, 2011). Added to these realities are the low engagement levels of institutions such as the South African agribusiness and retailers with emerging farmers, which to some extent reflect a continuation process of institutionalisedmarginalisation. Several studies have concluded that high transaction costs in either production or marketing of potentially remunerative commodities, excluded underprivileged emerging farmers form participating in lucrative enterprises (Kariuki, 2004), Baloyi, (2010). It is against this background, and given the policy of government to rid South African agriculture of its dualism and perceived exclusive nature, that it is critical to find appropriate institutional arrangements to prevent the continued marginalisation of emerging black farmers, and ensuring their participation in commercial supply chains. The ideal is to attain a situation in which these emerging black farmers become more productive, more market-oriented and better connected to markets than before. With improved knowledge about the challenges and constraints facing emerging farmers, private and public policy makers at national and provincial levels will be better equipped to focus their supportive activities on the needs of these emerging farmers with the aim to improve their relative position in the agricultural value chain.

2.2. Factors affecting performance of emerging farmers

The literature review focused on factors affecting performance of emerging farmers within the South African context. It provides a review of selected findings from previous studies undertaken by various authors such as Makhura (2011), De Lange (2004), Kristen and Vanzyl (1998), Chisasa and Makina (2012), report by Land and Development Bank of South Africa (2011) and others. According to the review of research carried out by the above mentioned authors, challenges faced by small farmers can be broadly classified into the following areas: constraints on production, access to production inputs, low quantity and poor quality, lack of value-addition at farm level, access to advisory services.

2.3. Commitment of the State to the agricultural sector of South Africa

South African government has developed and implemented a whole package of support structures and systems to ensure optimal support deemed necessary for sustainable and profitable agricultural development. The Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development (READ), Forestry and Fishers (DAFF) has several different programmes in place are geared towards improving access to land as a form redressing the injustices of the past. This is being done through a comprehensive land reform programs, such as restitution, redistribution and tenure reform. This in turn, has created an increased demand for the services offered by the DAFF. The increased demand for agricultural support services for smallholder and emerging farmers created by the land reform programmes is partly addressed through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program (CASP), the Micro-Agricultural Finance Initiative of South Africa (MAFISA, llima/Letsema, Agricultural Black Economic Empowerment (AgiBEE), Recapitalisation and Development Programme (RADP). This kick start, together with constant training, mentorship, market linkages and input supplier support programs, allowed these emerging farmers to enhance production and produce enough to sell into markets and make profits.

The South African government has failed to meet its delivery targets with a wide margin. The objectives of the land reform programme to transfer 30 percent of agricultural land to historically previously disadvantaged was changed from 2014 to 2025 when it became apparent that the envisaged time frames were unachievable. In general, the government is being criticized for being slow in delivering of land to those who were historically disadvantaged and lacking the political will to adopt the state-led fast-track land reform approach.

Challenges

The challenges with the current market-led (willing-seller-willing-buyer) land distribution approach are not unique to South Africa. The reluctance of white commercial farmers to offer land at reasonable market prices has contributed to the slow pace of the land distribution. In general, it has been argued that market prices are higher than the production value of land. It could argued that the WSWB policy is essentially a "willing seller" policy, because it protects the interests of white landowners by neither compelling them to sell against their will nor at a price with which they are not fully satisfied. Dlamini points out that willing seller-willing buyer approach effectively insulate white South Africans from any costs associated with restitution, and place the burden on South Africans tax payers as a whole (Dlamini, 2014). The policy treats all parties involved as equals whereas they are not, because in the past whites forcefully took the land from blacks under the apartheid system. In general, it has been argued that if the South Africa does not change its policy stance in the issue of land distribution, the pace of reform is bound to continue being slow in correcting imbalances in landownership. It could be concluded that the current market-based WSWB policy is not an ideal approach for South Africa, as it will not bring about expected outcomes in land reform.

It could be concluded that land policies remains a challenge in many African countries, and constantly need to be reviewed and improved to keep up with regional politics and global economic trends in order to achieve equitable redistribution of land.

This study incorporated methodological triangulation, which is defined as to the use of more than one method for gathering data (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). For the purpose of this study both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection are used.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The results were attained from personal interviews that were conducted with emerging farmers producing the selected commodities, to obtain insight into the challenges and constraints facing them in the production and marketing their produce.

Approximately 32 percent of participants who were interviewed, could be classified as emerging farmers. The study will define emerging farmers as individual or group, who are slightly more advanced than the smallholder farmers and holds more production assets, but struggles to scale up production, and has difficulty in accessing markets, and have the desire to commercialise their production. The intention is to provide a generic picture of the nature of the respondents and their responses without necessarily taking answers by answer. Although most of the assessed farms can be regarded to as operational, they face a number of challenges which impede commercialization.

Thus, 68 percent of the participants lack the necessary assets to farm and produce mainly for their own consumption instead of producing for markets and could not be considered for this particular study. These participants were mainly communal farmers from the villages such as Mogopa, Boikhutso, Tsetse, Welgevonden and Tshing. These farmers have the right to use the land they are farming on, through communal permission, and resettlement.

The study revealed that 50% of the farmers have more than 3 years of hands-on experience in farm management, and 30% have 2 to 3 years of experience in their respective fields. The remaining 20% have less than 2 years experience in farming. Thus, the challenges and constraints are more related to lack of access to mechanization and lack of production inputs. The study shows that most of the emerging farmers lack mechanizations and depend on hiring tractors, trucks, bailers, tillers and other multitudes of ploughing and harvesting implements which are scares within the local municipal area. Only 5% of respondents own tractors or any other implement required for farming ploughing and harvesting. Thus, only 35% of the land leased from government (Group of farmers who have benefited from Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) has been cultivated. The results further show that only 25% of communal land has been cultivated this season. Although, emerging farmers recently received packages of farming inputs from the Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development (READ), they complaint that the governments procurement and delivery of seeds, fertilizers, poisons and diesel is painfully slow, inadequate and often given to a few favoured farmers. Although they received inputs they were unable to cultivate all their arable land. Private land owners only managed to plant 20% of their land this past season, due to the lack of funds to procure the necessary inputs and lack of access to tractors and implements. Challenges and constraints faced by emerging farmers can be broadly classified into the following areas:

FINDINGS

3.1. Lack of access to financial assistance

Majority of emerging farmers experience difficulty in obtaining financial assistance. According to a review by Chisasa and Makina (2012), the performance of small and emerging farmers in South Africa has lagged behind globally and still falls below that of commercial farmers and non-farming private sector because of lack of access to credit. Emerging farmers are at a disadvantage in accessing credit. On the other hand, large farmers have the greater access and enjoy far better credit support provided by various credit institutions. Credit providers, such as commercial banks, prefer lending to commercial farmers and non-farm private sector because they are able to demonstrate financial viability and are able to offer collateral. However, emerging farmers generally lack these attributes and are deemed high risk (Chisasa and Makina, 2012). They are therefore unattractive to financial lenders. A further constraints to accessing credit is lack of clear land rights (Vorley, Fearn, and Ray, 2007). This study revealed that many of the emerging farmers do not own their land, but only have permission to occupy. Their growth is restrained by lack of clear land rights, since they cannot use their land security for financing. A further constraints experienced by all small and emerging farmers is that they often are under debt to private moneylenders. They need credit for carrying out current farm operations. Emerging farmers require a credit package covering production, investment and consumption credits and if necessary, credit for redemption of prior debts. Such packages are not available to them in formal credit markets (Land and Development Bank of South Africa, 2011).

3.2. Lack of access to implements and machinery

There is great need for emerging farmers to adopt to new machinery in order to overcome low levels of productivity. Tools and farm machinery are vital aids to field production while motorized and other transport equipment are needed by farmers to transport farm produce to markets, represent serious constraints to an average emerging farmer. The study shows that very few emerging farmers own farming machinery such as tractors, trucks, bailers, tillers, and other multitudes of ploughing and harvesting implements. Only 5% of respondents own tractors or any other implement required for farming ploughing and harvesting. Majority of the emerging farmers indicated that they did not have access to these assets and had to hire the machinery and equipment from neighbouring farmers (at the rate of anything between R350 and R600 per hector to hire tractor services). They indicated that it is very difficult to hire implements because window period for preparing the fields and planting was very narrow, and most of the contractors are not available to render their services during this period.

3.3. Lack of access to production inputs

Availability of inputs tends to be a major constraint for emerging farmers with the local municipality. Production inputs refer to the seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Farmers have limited buying power because inputs are normally packaged for the larger needs of commercial farmers. Higher prices, availability and financing for inputs are major barriers to their usage. Although emerging farmers recently received packages of farming inputs from the Department of Rural Environment and Agricultural Development (READ), they complaint that the governments procurement and delivery of seeds, fertilizers, poisons and diesel is painfully slow, inadequate and often given to a few favoured farmers.

3.4. Marketing challenges faced by emerging farmers

The findings from this study with regard to marketing problems, showed that farmers had marketing problems such as lack of market information, high transaction costs, low quality products thus resulting in their produce fetching low prices. Most farmers in this area have little or no market knowledge and poor business skills which limits their ability to search for new markets or to successfully negotiate better deals in the market, Market information is important because it provides knowledge on the type and quantity of produce required in the market, their quality and the price at which they will be sold. Emerging farmers struggle to comply with retailers' standards to compete with commercial farmers and to produce the desired quality and quantity of products because they lack the necessary market knowledge. Therefore, market information gives transparency to market participants willing to take part in exchanges and its availability reduces uncertainties related to unfair exchange. Information influences harvesting timings, minimizing damages, maintaining market preferred quality, value addition and treatment of crop field from marketing angle, packaging preferences, quality standards, minimizing transport costs as well as transport losses, use of cool chains or cold storage facilities, marketing mechanism, rural regulated markets, regulated or support prices (Makhura, 2001).

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusion

The results were attained from personal interviews that were conducted with emerging farmers producing the selected commodities, to obtain insight into the challenges and constraint facing them in the production and marketing their produce. The study revealed that emerging farmers the Dr K K District Municipality find it difficult to fully participate in the commercial space, because they face unique challenges and constraint and do not have access to comprehensive agricultural support services. The study revealed that, there are numerous factors that affect emerging farmers prospects in the value chain and with establishing market linkages. These factors included inadequate post settlement support lack of access to financial assets and linkages to financial services, access to implements and machinery and access to inputs.

Despite the strong political and policy support for emerging farmers in the province and significant increase in national agricultural budgets over the last 20 years or so, the support currently rendered to emerging farmers is inadequate. This illustrated by the fact that only a very small number of emerging farmers within the District benefit from such support in a typical year. Bulk of the budget available to support farmers is not well spent, with particular imbalances evident between relatively large amounts of support going to few new emerging farmers in badly conceptualized land reform projects, at the expense of many existing black emerging farmers within the District. The increase in agricultural budgets will only accomplish little, because the vision of government is extremely focused on supporting individual farmers. Excessive amount of monies are channeled into land reform projects which need a dramatic redesigning and overhauling (case of spending good money on badly conceptualized projects). The allocation of these funds is also dependent on extension services that are designed to serve only few emerging farmers and cannot be feasibly scaled up.

The findings from this study suggest that there is a still a lot that needs to be done in order to incorporate emerging farmers to the mainstream agricultural market. Lack of collective action amongst farmers presents a strong case for lack of knowledge on the advantages of organizing themselves into commodity groups, in order to achieve economies of scale when marketing their products buying production inputs. They will have the potential to secure better terms of trade such as better inputs prices, lower transaction costs, and access to training and other services.

The study recommends that the Ventersdorp emerging farmers be separated into three categories. The categories are defined as follows:

- 1st category: Farmers that are fully operational and semi-commercial, have relevant infrastructure, require capital expansion and working capital and farm owner/s have a clearly mapped out plan to further development the business.
- 2nd category: Farms that are fully operational and semi-commercial, require finance to upgrade infrastructure and working capital, and farm owner/s has no clear plan for development.
- 3rd category: Farms are non-operational or are just small projects. They do not have infrastructure in place and require recapitalization.

It is expected that the categorization of farmers should inform the prioritization of channeling of funding and appropriation thereof.

4.2. Recommendations

Results from the study suggest that, there is a need for the development and implementation of a comprehensive farm support programme. Models for each industry should be developed to identify viable farms for emerging farmer settlement. These farms should be provided with the necessary supporting infrastructure and proper selection and follow-up of beneficiaries is crucial in order for land reform projects to develop into sustainable commercial farms. Post-settlement assistance therefore should be seen as an inherent component of land reform. In instances, where farmers already operate on certain farms, rigorous training should be provided in technical, marketing and financial management. The appropriate support services need to be developed, including financial services, market information, input supply networks, transportation and storage infrastructure and extension. The only way to remedy the situation would appear to be re-strategize spending priorities to support emerging farmers, by using existing resources more effectively. In respect of Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme, there is an urgent need to shift emphasis of support from individual on-farm infrastructure and inputs to community-level/municipal area infrastructure, market development and institutional re-engineering. The current funding model, which focuses on individual farming projects, has limited impact, cannot feasibly be scaled up and does not lend itself towards consolidated public goods and regulation, which are effective ways of benefitting larger number of emerging farmers, which in the past were used to develop and benefit white farmers.

The option of providing off-farm infrastructure depot or service centre in regional or municipal areas appears to be the most financially viable and sustainable option over the long term solution around the shortage of production inputs. The establishment of a depot or service centre could be an effective vehicle to ensure access to inputs and production assets to farmers. The service centres would assist in commercializing emerging farmers who lack resources and expertise so that they may participate in the mainstream economy. This entails formulation and promotion of a regional farming guidance improvement plan which entailed shifting the focus from individuals to groups of farmers in a region. This shift reflects the limitations of providing farm guidance on an individual farmer basis, the expansion of agricultural land for mass production and the necessity of promoting the development of both livestock and crop-based agricultural organizations. The infrastructure will go a long way in assisting regional or a group of farmers engaged in similar production in a given area. In addition, fixed cost could be spread across a group of farmers, resulting in a decrease in individual costs. Furthermore, collective action would strengthen farmer's market position, bargaining power and lobbying power. It would be advantageous to organize emerging farmers into commodity groups, because they would be able to achieve economies of scale when marketing the produce. Therefore, formulation of formally organized groups would have potential to secure better terms of trade such as better sourcing prices, lower transaction costs, and access to training and other services. The implementation and outcome of this grouping would enable the service centre to create a platform from which emerging can access product and land selection advice, skills and capacity building programmes, technical support operational and enterprise development support, as well as marketing and distribution support. This business model highlights the strategy to develop emerging farmers and thereafter to replicate the adopted model highlights the strategy to develop emerging farmers and thereafter to replicate the adopted model on a larger scale across the District. This proposed solution will have a significant development impact in terms of employment, income generation, and participation in value adding linkages as well as sustainability.

The variation among emerging farmers assessed during the study, requires that the intervention by the Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development be strategic and target based on each farms status and potential. Thus the implementation of the above comprehensive farm support programme should be undertaken in line with selected enterprises and essential potential of each farm.

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