



SA FANRPAN digest

Issue No.: 15

In this issue we cover the following topics:

1. Influencing policy on food, agriculture and natural resources: The NAMC/FANRPAN/UOL met with the advisory and research staff of parliament
2. COVID-19 and food security in Southern Africa: Building equitable, resilient and better food systems

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FANRPAN DIGEST

FANRPAN Digest is a bi-monthly report that is produced by the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) through the Agricultural Industry Trusts Division. The publication aims to communicate developments as they happen within the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN). This issue focuses on two topics: (i) Influencing food, agriculture, and natural resources policy. The NAMC/FANRPAN/UOL met with parliament's advisory and research staff to discuss food, agriculture and natural resources; and (ii) Preliminary outcomes of Southern African food systems, in light of climate change and COVID-19: Building equitable, resilient and better food systems – Webinar

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1. INFLUENCING POLICY ON FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES: THE NAMC/FANRPAN/UOL MET WITH THE ADVISORY AND RESEARCH STAFF OF PARLIAMENT

By Ms Nomantande Yeki and Mr Matsobane (BM) Mpyana

1.1. Introduction

The Agricultural and Food-system Resilience: Increasing Capacity and Advising Policy (AFRICAP) project, through networks of local, national, regional and international organisations, has been sharing evidence gathered in the project's research and modelling with policy- and decision-makers to help policy-makers apply the collected evidence in their work to enable climate-smart and sustainable agricultural development.

1.2. The evidence to influence policies

The National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and University of Leeds project champions had an engagement with advisory and research staff of parliament to discuss the evidence collected in the past four years of the project. The meeting covered three presentations that included key milestones of the project, such as ecology work, baseline work, and Future Estimator for Emissions and Diets (iFEED). All these presentations covered policy implications.

The ecology work presentation provided an overview of the agro-ecology research conducted by AFRICAP in South Africa; it highlighted the need to evaluate the ecological implications of conservation agriculture, especially with a focus on how different farm management practices affect crop pests and diseases and natural remedies that control those pests and diseases. Preliminary results indicate that cover cropping and low tillage may help reduce the ecological impact of agriculture and improve environmental sustainability and food system resilience to climate shocks and pest pressures.

The presentation on the baseline work outlined that a household survey was conducted in 2019 to gather information about farming systems, including crop cultivation and livestock, and farmers' response to unexpected weather conditions. The household survey revealed that some farmers had changed their farming practices and others were willing to change due to climate change.

Lastly, the Future Estimator for Emissions and Diets (iFEED) is a crop and climate modelling tool that maps pathways to desirable futures. The iFEED

presentations gave a number of scenarios on the impact of climate change on a range of agricultural commodities in the future and outlined possible future land use patterns and their implications for food security and climate-smart agriculture.

1.3. Conclusion

It is important to note that each presentation ended with a number of policy recommendations and some key discussions from the attendees. Engagements like these that present evidence to policy- and decision-makers are crucial for climate-smart and sustainable agricultural development.



2. PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN FOOD SYSTEMS, IN LIGHT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND COVID-19: BUILDING EQUITABLE, RESILIENT AND BETTER FOOD SYSTEMS – WEBINAR

By Ndumiso Mazibuko, PhD and Mr Brian Makhele

2.1. Background

Agriculture in Africa plays an important role in eradicating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainable development. Agriculture further provides the largest upstream and downstream employment and economic growth multipliers of any sector in the economy. In sub-Saharan Africa, particularly, the challenges of feeding a growing and increasingly urbanised population while increasing household incomes for rural producers have been the point of major debate over the years. Agricultural production, for any of the product systems, depends mostly on climatic conditions. These climatic conditions include, but are not limited to, rainfall patterns that determine the year-to-year production of many extensive crops and animal production practices, the intensity and frequency of unpredictable temperature variations, as well as the intensity and frequency of storms and disease and pest outbreaks.

Developing climate-smart agri-food systems in sub-Saharan Africa is a precondition for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. COVID-19 came at a time when agriculture in some countries was recovering from drought and disease outbreaks (foot and mouth disease) which had a negative impact on the agricultural sector. The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has choked off the economy of many countries, with only agriculture coming out in the positive in some countries. The impact of COVID-19 has further highlighted the lack of household food security in most Southern African countries, mainly in rural areas. This was highlighted by the number of households that lacked access to food during the strict lockdown levels in Southern African countries.

2.2. Rationale of the webinar

In light of the above, the South African AFRICAP fellow (Dr Ndumiso Mazibuko) arranged a webinar to discuss solutions to the above-mentioned challenges. The webinar aimed to take a deeper look at the interlinking issues of food security, nutrition, climate change and food systems in Southern Africa and to consider how practitioners and policy-makers can build more equitable, resilient and better food

systems. The audience included policy-makers, researchers and farmers in the food systems arena. The audience also included members of civil society and relevant experts from academia in the space.

2.2. The key speakers and scope covered

The speakers are highlighted below, and they assisted in covering the questions highlighted below.

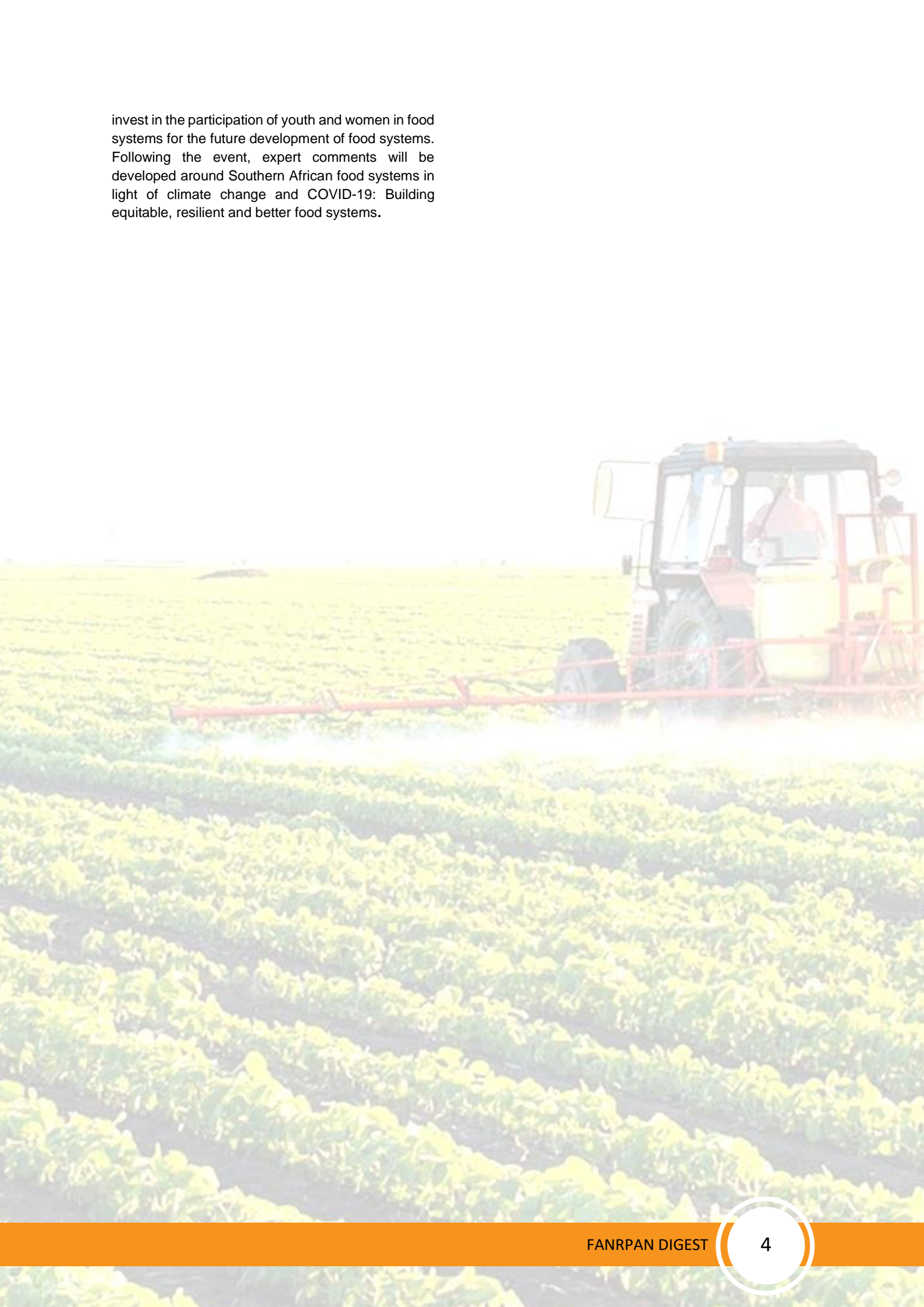
- Prof. Sheryl Hendriks, University of Pretoria
 - What is the food security and nutrition status of Southern Africa?
 - How have Southern African countries been performing in terms of food security and nutrition?
- Dr Ousmane Badiane, AKADEMIYA 2063
 - How have staple food markets in Southern Africa been disrupted by climate change and, more recently, COVID-19?
 - Where has the disruption of staple food markets hotspots been in Southern Africa?
 - How can staple food markets in Southern Africa be transformed?
- Mr Menghestab Haile, World Food Programme
 - How has chronic and acute food insecurity been in Southern Africa?
 - What policy measures are required to provide for systems that produce enough and nutritionally sufficient food for the population's needs?
 - How can we build more equitable, resilient and better food systems?

This session was chaired by Prof. Tim Benton, Research Director: Energy, Environment and Resources Programme, Chatham House.

2.3. Concluding remarks

The main outcomes of the event were that COVID-19 has highlighted the plight of malnutrition and the importance of sound nutrition. There is a need for a co-ordinated approach to building equitable, resilient and better food systems. Furthermore, the government should create an enabling environment for a working food system for all. There is a need to

invest in the participation of youth and women in food systems for the future development of food systems. Following the event, expert comments will be developed around Southern African food systems in light of climate change and COVID-19: Building equitable, resilient and better food systems.



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