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Domestic Policies and Farming in South Africa

In order to maintain a quality lifestyle and a healthy lifestyle one must first be able to sustain the basic fruits which allow survival, in addition to opportunity for self improvement. Poverty is often defined as the incapability of one to sustain those basic but important fruits of life. Poverty is not a condition that can be wished away but an ongoing, increasing economic problem that can be reduced if paid more attention to. No one is entirely safe from being poverty stricken. Individuals and communities have the likelihood to be struck with a crisis which could affect the economy, leaving the majority of inhabitants in poverty. Governments play a big role in society and social structure. If a government happens to be ill prepared for a crisis it could very well lead to an economic disaster in turn leading to poverty.

South Africa is an upper-middle-income country yet 40% of the poorest families lack the access to health care, welfare, clean water, energy, education, and food which is just under 50% of the population (Poverty). The distribution of wealth is an uneven inequality in South Africa. With that being stated, who there leads a healthy lifestyle; a quality one? In 1995, the annual amount needed to uplift the poor to the poverty line was about \$400 million (Poverty). Everyone needs to be aware of the seriousness of poverty and drastic steps need to be taken by governments as well as individuals and their communities to fix this epidemic and prevent it from furthering.

Health care is intertwined with poverty. There is a sufficient lack of health care given to the poor do to the lack of finances. This lack of health care is a cause of malnutrition. Malnutrition is not always caused by a lack of food and it is not always classified as a medical problem. Malnutrition can be the outcome of economic, social, and politically related complexes. This has a great impact on opportunities and on the quality of life. It is evident that poor children suffer from stunting (Poverty). Nationally, height-for-age measurements in South Africa range from 23% to 27%, 20% are anemic, 10% are iron-deficient, and one in three show a high vitamin A status, causing a public health issue (Poverty). Diseases and dietary intake are immediate causes of malnutrition (Poverty). To take care of this problem, South Africa must require nutrition goals and follow up to make sure they are being met by the public.

Welfare and safety net programs were developed to help the poor. Their primary focus is to ensure poverty and inequality are lessened and controlled. Some goals for welfare and safety net programs include unemployment, maternity, childcare, widowhood, disabilities, old age, and social and economical protection (Poverty). The downfall to these programs is the ability to receive their service. In rural South Africa, they have limited or no access to the services. 10% of the total 99% of votes are about welfare. Welfare is the fourth largest vote in the government budget. Within the welfare program there is social security which takes up 90% of the welfare budget (Poverty). The White Paper on Social Welfare is a developmental welfare system that emphasizes "helping people to help themselves," (Poverty). Welfare and safety net systems were developed to target vulnerable categories of people and are making a difference.

Clean water and sanitation is key in staying healthy. Unfortunately this has been hard to come by but things look like they are going to soon change. Absence of sanitation services and portable water systems make people more likely to have poor health. Sanitation and clean water can improve the quality

of life and has shown to have an effect on the productive capacity of people. The majority of people without access to piped water systems and sanitation do live in rural areas in South Africa. Only 21% of households have piped water and only 28% have sanitation facilities (Poverty). 80% of poor households in rural areas of South Africa have no access to piped water and 74% of rural households have to fetch their water daily (Poverty). The Community Water Supply and Sanitation Program (CWSS) focuses on the areas in South Africa that lack the proper clean water and sanitation supply. In 1997, the White Paper on a National Water Policy for South Africa was adopted as a new national water bill (Poverty). In this water policy it stated that water used for agriculture, accounting for half the nation's water usage, would have to pay a price for water (Poverty). It also allowed an open land policy allowing those who do not have their own land to go to their neighbors and use that as a water source (Poverty). There is much work needed on irrigation systems to help procure water.

“Energy poverty,” is the condition of having less than a certain level of daily energy consumption necessary to maintain a minimum standard of living (Poverty). Energy is divided into three sub-sectors; electricity, hydro-carbon (coal, gas, and paraffin), and biomass (wood, dung, and crop waste) (Poverty). The lack of energy has negative impacts on hygiene, health, nutrition, and comfort (Poverty). Just fewer than half of South Africans do not have access to electricity and most of those who have the access are not able take full advantage of it. Most of the poor in South Africa meet their energy needs by using biomass fuels or a combination of biomass and hydrocarbon fuels. With the poverty stricken using biomass, it provides a serious health and safety issue to the women and children who gather it. It is a health hazard because handling fecal matter can cause serious sickness and even spread diseases. 44% of households use paraffin every day making it the most widely used commercial fuel (Poverty). Another issue in the energy crisis is even if they could provide sufficient piping of water for everyone, there is still a dilemma with the government. The government does not want to electrify any property until the tenure is secure making it difficult to sufficiently supply the poor with their needs.

Education is the most important part of building a strong agricultural economy as well as improving a developing one. Southern Africa has a very wide variety of educational programs in the countries due to the changes that are still being made. Education through career/technical training and hands on experience is becoming more available to all residents in South Africa. Education in South Africa can be credited as the cause for the improvement in agriculture in the past several generations or the reason that farming in South Africa has been relatively unsuccessful. (Education improves the production methods of those who can obtain the advanced education, those who cannot are left behind.) Educational systems are required. Education is available to the 12 million potential students. In South Africa, the government allows education at least 20% of their total budget (Garson). Schools are divided into Primary and Matric- or High- School facilities. Primary schools offer grades one through six and high schools offer grades seven through twelfth. A 13th year is optional but necessary for university entrance. Classes at the highest level must be passed in order to qualify for the Public Universities in South Africa (Garson). Looking at the numbers of students that are enrolled at the universities would lead one to believe that the citizens in South Africa are very educated. As with any nation, looking at current enrollment shows how educated the next generation will be, not how educated the current workforce is. With 21 public universities and 15 private and technical colleges there are more than 1 million students enrolled in advanced education programs (Garson).

The problem is that some of the students enrolled in the universities are not necessarily the farmers. All the citizens in South Africa that are involved with the farming lifestyle can not take advantage of the advanced educational programs that are offered do to poverty. Those in the agricultural industry can not always afford to pay for the higher education. Living on a family farm in Iowa, time is a very important factor in production and efficiency. We can relate to the way South African farmers may feel about getting an education. A typical point of view on getting an education is that it is a “waste of time” for one who is just going to farm. Education is more and more effective with all the technological

advancements in the agricultural history. Learning and knowledge is a very specific trade to base a private operation around. It can make the operation or it could break it. In a developing agriculture industry, experience can be the best teacher of all but as the economy grows we believe that specialized education is the key to success.

The motivation behind racial discrimination is generally the government or ruling system in a country. The population in South Africa is a majority of blacks and a minority being white. A big obstacle that limits the efficiency of farming in South Africa is racial discrimination and land ownership laws. Over 75% of South Africa's population is black and 85% of the land in South Africa is not allowed to be owned by a black person (Vorhies). In white areas, whites own their property outright and are able to buy or sell land on the market (Vorhies). Large private farms that are operated by wealthy white citizens are few and far between, even though they dominate the profits (Vorhies). In South Africa, the poorest 10% of citizens make barely over 1% of the total income while the wealthiest 10% make closer to 50%. Most land that is available to blacks is not private land but government owned and controlled under tribal/colonial law. This tribal land is controlled by chiefs or heads of the tribe. They control the use of the land and use it to produce very little food. Building is the primary use of the tribe's land. On this tribal land there are usually no markets so the people do not have a surplus of food (Vorhies). The lack of privately owned farmland and open markets is a major factor of hunger and poverty. The agriculture output in southern Africa is far below production potential.

Southern Africa is a developing region with many productive farming practices. Even though this region still has many improvements to make, the positive changes that have been taking place in the last 10-20 years have turned the economy around completely. Less than 4% of South Africa is the South African Republic. South African Republic produces 17% of the country's red meat. They also produce good portions of the country's wheat, potatoes, corn, sugar, cotton, and sunflower seeds. 81% of South Africa's wool also comes from the South African Republic (Vorhies). Farming is an occupation that is very common among black South Africans. These farmers are not being restricted by their cultural or religious requirements but by their government. (The government organized tribal reservations to help groups of black South African farmers become more independent.) Their plans stopped these farmers from owning their own land, limiting them to small amounts of farmable land. This farmland is set aside by the government and limited to black South Africans in each province. Laws concerning land rights have been negatively affected by a constant change in colonial governments ruling South Africa. Even after gaining freedom, South Africa was accustomed to having a very controlling government limiting the basic rights and freedoms of the citizens.

Our suggestion to improve and ensure the path to food and nutrition security lies solely in education. Education is a way to give small scale framers a new path in developing their own plans. In South Africa, an important topic that we believe needs to continue to be addressed is money, market, and resource management. We believe that this is as important as the actual production of the products, raw or commercialized. The management of resources can be used as a way to learn through experience as well. If one used the method of experimenting and trying their own ideas, these farmers could move their economy forward at a phenomenal pace. Although there is always room for improvement we believe South Africa is on the right path for success. They have made outstanding advancements into their future through education and economic development.

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