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## The Effect of Land Reform Policy on Land Use Pattern Change and Environment in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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### Abstract

Land reform in rural South Africa aims at readdressing the inequity inherited from the former Apartheid era by assisting the black population to attain land from white farm owners. However, the reform has been slow in progress up to now. Post-settlement support is also said to be poor and inadequate, resulting in a suppressed productivity of the new farmland or even in a collapse of the farm itself. In order to maintain the productivity and economic value of the transferred farmland, corporation between agricultural agencies or the previous owners of the farm is sought by the government in the recent years.

Nevertheless, the detailed economical and environmental effects of the land reform are yet to be assessed even though evident shortcomings can already be noticed.

In order to assess the biophysical impact of the land reform we collected soil samples from farmland where land transfer has occurred and compared these with soil characteristics recorded during the years before land transfer. Interviews with farmers were conducted to assess the farming system and management skills applied to relate farming management change and its environmental consequences. Areas with different types of farming systems and mode of land transfers were selected to illustrate the different consequences among them.

Expected results are that in areas where land transfer has happened farming management will have changed and there will be some biophysical consequences such as degradation of soil, resulting in a reduction in production. This development should be seen, irrespective of whether farming systems have changed or not. This study will help to understand the relationship of farming management and the environmental effect on the newly transferred farmland. Furthermore, an understanding of the constraints that the farmers face will be beneficial to plan a more appropriate agricultural extension project for the area.

**Keywords:** Environmental effect, farming skills, land reform, soil fertility, South Africa