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Land Conservation and Food Security Threats in Southern Zambia: A Land Tenure Dimension

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Abstract

In Zambia, smallholder farmers are the major food producers and highly dependent on rain fed agriculture. Amidst the environmental challenges, sustainable land practices are imperative to attaining better agricultural productivity and food security status. The objectives of this study are to quantify the differential impacts of land tenure regimes on incidence of land practices in agricultural productivity, to establish the prevalence of food insecurity using the food consumption score indicator and to determine factors that influence food security. Data collection employed a structured questionnaire survey and focus group discussions on land tenure systems existing in Zambia namely state (leasehold) and customary (indigenous) covering 400 farm households in four districts of southern Zambia. Data analysis was done in IBM SPSS and STATA software with multiple regression analysis and ordered probit model statistical methods. The results showed that land practices measured as adopting levels was significant in state land with activities of crop diversification, fertiliser tree planting and use of organic manure. Similarly, food security status revealed better results for state land compared to customary land with 40 % and 68 % poor status indicating significant statistical differences. The factors that significantly contributed were age, education, marital status, household size, access to credit, number of crops, number of livestock species and household income. The study suggests that implementation of sustainable land practices play a vital role in improvement of agricultural productivity and food security status. In addition, land tenure systems have a huge influence in investments of land conservation and this calls for concrete supportive land and agricultural policies.

Keywords: Adopting, food security, land tenure, practices, Zambia