

“Selling pesticides like biscuits” – Governance challenges of pesticide supply in Zambia

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Background

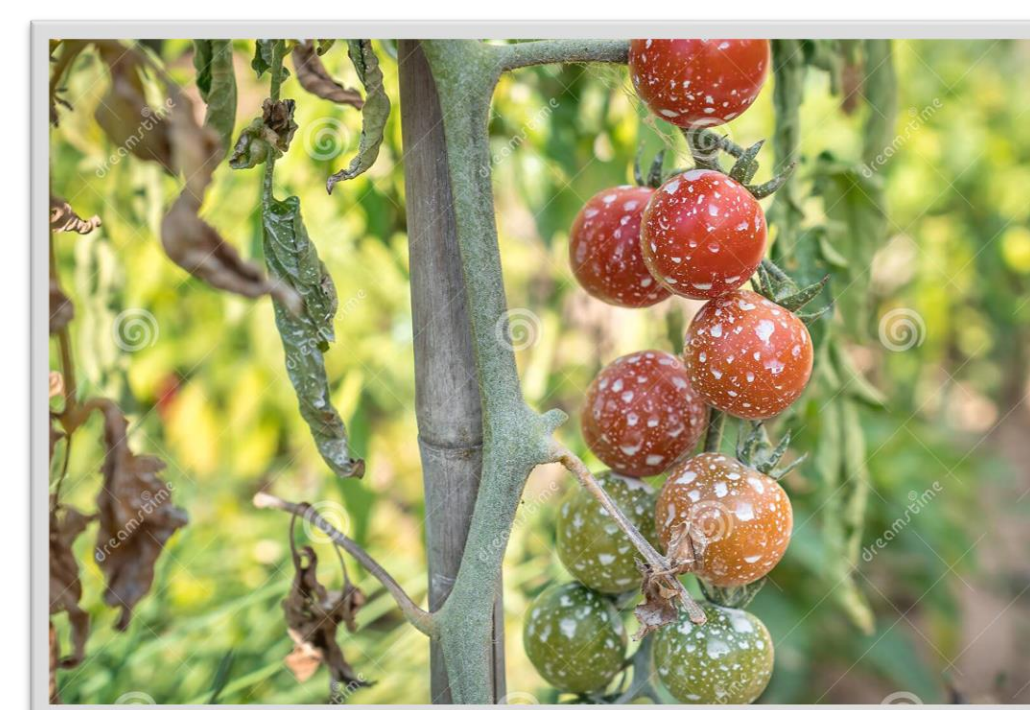
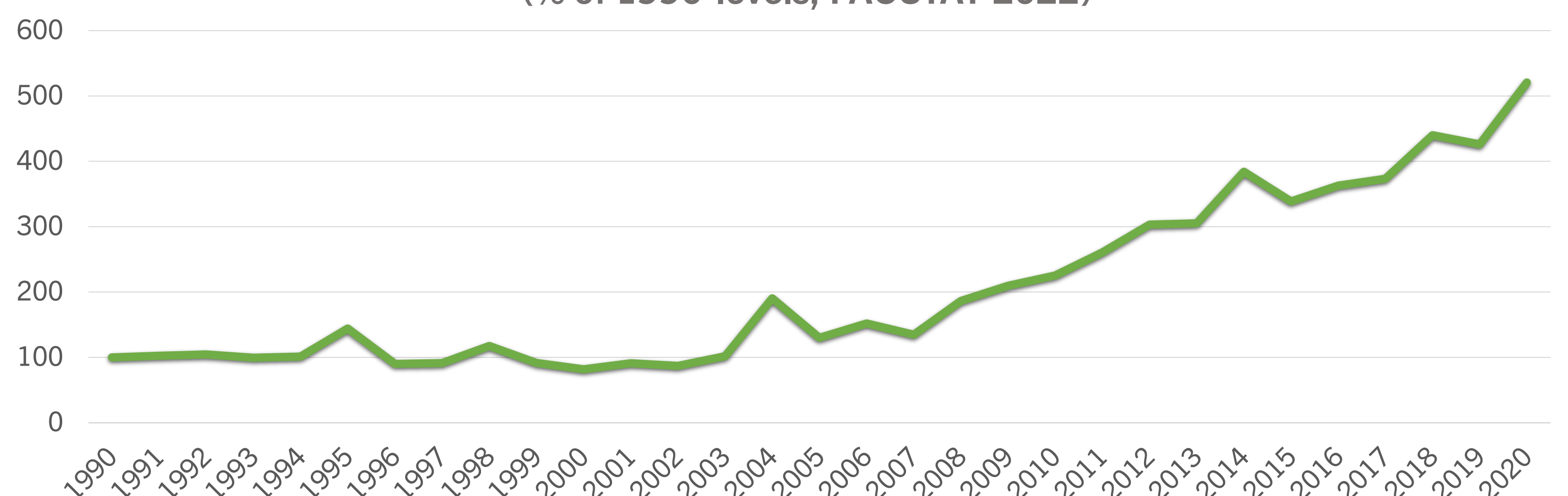
- While it is commonly believed that smallscale farming in SSA is still “organic by default”, in some regions a “pesticide revolution“ manifests (see graph).
- Main drivers are cheap generic pesticide imports from Asia, rising costs for manual labour, rising pest pressure and commercialization of farming.
- Consequentially, pesticide markets are booming. Plenty of new brands, importers and traders enter the market.
- Yet, in poorly regulated environment poor pesticide management is ubiquitous. E.g., low adoption of protective equipment, food and environmental contamination (see images on the right).

Methods

- Conceptual framework of governance challenges based institutional economics along the pesticide life cycle (see below).
- Desk review of Zambian pesticide policies and laws
- 13 Process Net-Maps (Participatory stakeholder mapping) combined with 87 qualitative interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (public administration, pesticide importers, NGOs and local agrodealers etc.)
- 18 Farmer group discussions and Participatory Impact Diagrams with 160 farmers to monitor practices and impacts at farm level.

Increasing quantity of pesticide imports to SSA

(% of 1990-levels, FAOSTAT 2022)

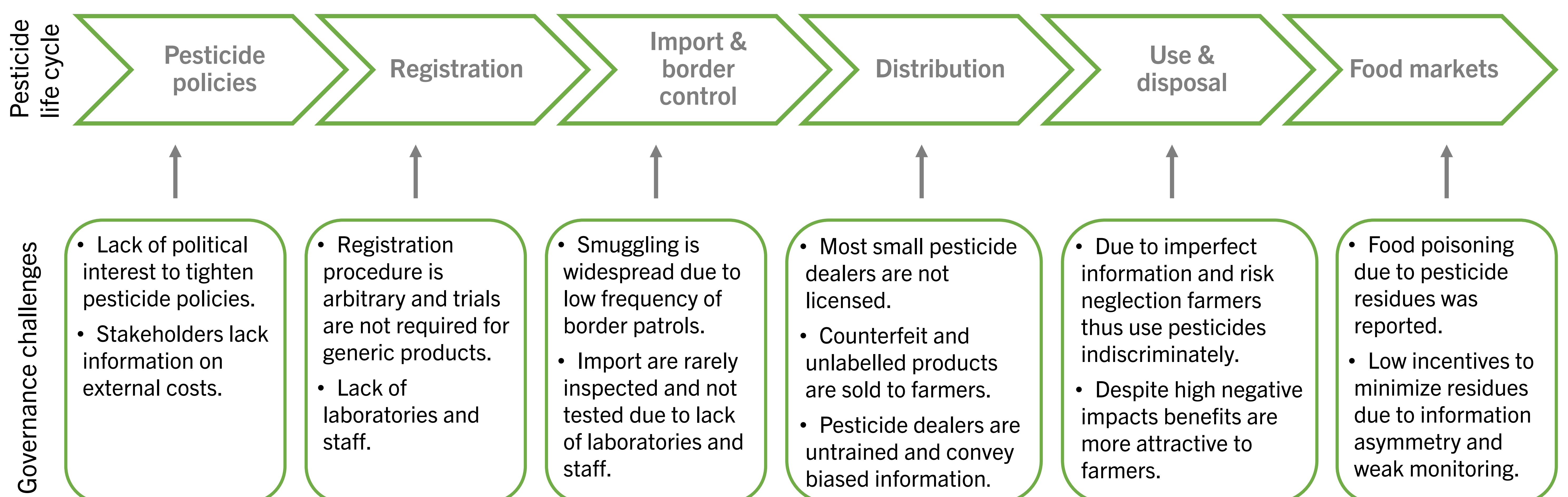


Pictures illustrate poor pesticide management practices (e.g., refusal of protective equipment, food contamination and deliberate dumping of packaging) that are common countries where the institutional support for pesticide users is weak.



Pictures of informal pesticide trade in Zambia. Highly-hazardous pesticides are sold in a very improvised set-up to smallholders, enticing them to be used without information on their mode of action and precautions.

Results



Conclusions

- Pesticide uptake increases rapidly in SSA (i.e., “pesticide revolution”) and must be institutionally supported otherwise it threatens to thwart sustainable development.
- Despite long-term international efforts, hazardous pesticides are still available to smallholders and regulation systems are ineffective in ensuring sustainable pesticide management.
- Imperfect information induces stakeholders to systematically underestimate pesticide costs. Therefore, public demand for stricter policies is low.
- Efforts should be made to monitor pesticide costs and design viable ways of pesticide policy enforcement.

