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Promoting food security in Zimbabwe by addressing adoption challenges for female farmers: Pfumvudza agricultural program

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Abstract

The Pfumvudza agricultural program in Zimbabwe seeks to enhance food security and agricultural productivity by promoting sustainable agricultural practices among smallholder farmers. The program promotes the adoption of new agricultural practices, including crop diversification, conservation agriculture, and sustainable land use, among farmers, particularly smallholder farmers. While the programme holds great potential, female smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe encounter significant challenges in embracing and implementing it effectively. One of the primary obstacles encountered by female smallholder farmers is limited access to essential resources such as land, finance, and agricultural inputs. Insufficient access to land restricts their ability to expand their farming activities and limits their potential yields. Inadequate access to finance makes it difficult for them to invest in necessary inputs and technologies, hindering their productivity. Additionally, limited knowledge and technical skills in the new farming practices pose a significant barrier. Lack of training and awareness programs restricts their capacity to adopt innovative techniques and adapt to changing agricultural trends effectively. Furthermore, gender inequalities, cultural norms, and patriarchal attitudes restrict women's participation and decision-making power in agricultural activities, exacerbating these challenges. To promote the widespread adoption and success of the Pfumvudza program, it is imperative to address the structural and cultural barriers that hinder the participation and decision-making power of female smallholder farmers. Hence, to overcome these barriers, gender-responsive policies and programmes are necessary, ensuring equal access to resources, knowledge, and decision-making for all farmers. By addressing these challenges, female smallholder farmers can fully participate in the Pfumvudza program, contributing to improved food security and agricultural productivity. This study aims to propose policy interventions and strategies (favorable to female smallholders) to overcome these challenges. Research conducted in the Goromonzi district with 180 female farmers aims to identify practical approaches for empowering and enabling women's full participation in agriculture. By addressing the identified barriers and promoting gender equality, the study aims to enhance food security, increase agricultural productivity, and foster sustainable rural development in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: Conservation agriculture, female, food security, pfumvudza, smallholder farmers, sustainable, Zimbabwe