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Review

Zimbabwe's agricultural industry

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The aim of this paper is to investigate the agricultural industry in the Republic of Zimbabwe. Hence, the types of agricultural products, the different classes of farmers, the agricultural system, the agricultural extension services, the marketing of agricultural products and the contribution of agriculture to the economy of Zimbabwe were examined. It was found that agriculture used to be the mainstay of Zimbabwean economy more especially in the 1980s. However, the trend is reversed in the recent years as a result of basically political instability in the country. This development leads to a drastic reduction in the Zimbabwean agricultural output to the extent that the country can no longer feed itself. Finally, the government should consider the possible consequences of the conditionality of IMF/World before accepting any package from them. It was also recommended that the government should tackle the problem being faced by farmers.

Key words: Agriculture, Zimbabwe, Africa.

INTRODUCTION

In the recent times there have been a lot of innovations and breakthroughs that have radically changed the mode and nature of agriculture particularly in the developed countries. Today's agriculture is characterised by the heavy use of synthetic fertilizer and pesticides, extensive irrigation, large scale animal husbandry, reliance of machinery, growth of Agri-business and decline of family farming and the transportation of products across international boundaries. Agriculture continues to occupy an important position in the global economy. Thus agricultural sector still remains the key sector that contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment and foreign exchange earnings in the economy of many countries. For instance, Monke (2004) pointed out that in the United States, agriculture and related industries contribute over 1 trillion dollars to GDP annually and employ more than 15% of the total workforce. Similarly, in India Agriculture and allied sectors like forestry and fishing accounted for 18.5% of total Indian GDP in 2005 to 2006 (at 1999 to 2000 constant prices) and employed about 58% of the country's workforce. It accounted for 10.95% of India's exports in 2005 to 2006 and about 46% of India's geographical area is used for agricultural activity (Sharma, 2007).

Furthermore, agriculture is also heavily tied to other industries (goods and services), such as equipment manufacturers, feed suppliers, transportation, food retailers, restaurants and other sectors in the economy (Dandago, 2005). In effect, a healthy agricultural sector is vital to the economy as a whole. And any significant problem in the sector could affect the food supply and demand which could eventually lead to higher prices of foodstuff, increase unemployment, reduce trade, and eventually result in a concurrent negative impact on the industries that rely on agricultural sector for sources of raw material (Monke, 2004).

APRODEV (2002) and Carmody (1998) observe that until recently Zimbabwe was one of the most industrialised economies in Sub-Saharan Africa, with an extensive agro-processing industry and a relatively diversified industrial sector. However, with the recent political and economic crisis, the country's agricultural sector and the economy in general suffered a lot of setbacks. This study is an attempt to review the developments in the agricultural sector of Zimbabwe. Consequently, the following key issues with regards to the Zimbabwean agricultural industry were discussed: background of the agricultural industry, crop and animal production, commercial and subsistence farming, the nature of the agricultural exports, the characteristics of agricultural sector's workforce, extension service, agricultural training and development, challenges of agricultural sector and

and finally, conclusion and recommendations.

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IN ZIMBABWE

Agriculture is the backbone of Zimbabwe's economy and underpins the economic, social and political lives of the majority of the people of Zimbabwe. Hence, APRODEV (2002) predicted that this situation will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future. Newitt (2007) on the other hand, notes that agricultural sector accounted for 18% of the country's GDP in 2005; both commercial and subsistence farming are being practiced to produce various crops and animals. However, a significant portion of the products that are produced commercially are normally being exported. Although, women participate in the agricultural production, their men counterpart virtually dominate the industry. Furthermore, Newitt (2007) observes that Zimbabwe possesses rich agricultural resources. In 2003 an estimated 8% of the country was cultivated. Forests cover 45% of the country, although the logging industry is small and wood cut in Zimbabwe is used mostly for fuel. Zimbabwe is also rich in minerals; for instance Gold has been mined since ancient times, and the Great Dyke contains deposits of dozens of different lucrative minerals.

Zimbabwe's climate is dependent on the rains brought by the Indian Ocean monsoons (seasonal winds). Up to 1,000 mm (40 in) of rain falls each year in the eastern part of the country between the months of October and March; rain levels reduce to about half that amount in the dry southwest. Little if any rain falls from March to October, when the weather gets cold with frosts common in the mountains and central plateau areas. Since the late 1970s rainfall has been very irregular and there have been serious droughts, which have led to soil erosion in some areas and decreased agricultural production.

Crop production

The principal crops produced in the Zimbabwean communal areas are maize, cotton, sugar, groundnuts, beans and cow peas. While the minor crops in commercial terms such as beans, cow peas and groundnuts are considered to be the crops for women. The major commercial crops which generate cash income are seen as men's crops, and these include Tobacco, Cut-Flowers, Raw Sugar Cane, Cotton, Chilled Vegetables, Coffee, Fruit, Tea (APRODEV, 2002). More often than not, the significant part of the crops that are produced commercially, are being exported to other countries. On the other hand, most of the crops that are produced in the communal area are for consumption. Although, the initial post independence period saw a major boom in comercial crop production in communal areas, the trend went down later. Cotton is one of the major crops produced for commercial purposes in both the communal and and commercial lands. From Table 1, it is obvious that cotton production in communal areas has grown considerably since 1985 with the area dedicated for cotton cultivation more than doubling from 115,000 ha to 353,000 ha in 2001; and similarly, production more than doubling. In contrast cotton production in commercial areas has declined considerably, with the area for cotton cultivation falling from 76,617 ha to 37,473 ha in 2000/01 with corresponding production of 11,000 tonnes and 51,713 tonnes respectively. Commercial farmers have reduced cotton production, while communal area farmers have expanded it to a large extent.

The foregoing mentioned change coincided with the fall in global demand for cotton. APRODEV (2002) observes that since 1950 cotton's share in total fiber consumption has declined from over 80 to 40% in recent years. Cotton prices in the first nine months of 2001 declined by 14% compared to 2000. This was in response to a 6% increase in global production in 2001. Similarly, the decline was in part a result of US policies of increased public support to cotton production, although increased production in China and India also played a role. Prices were predicted to decline still further in 2002 by 4%.

Furthermore, maize is another major crop in Zimbabwe. According to APPRODEV (2002), 80% of the population is directly involved in its production. The Grain Marketing Board of Zimbabwe receives 75% of its grain from Small holder/communal farmers. Thus maize is a very important income earner in the rural areas. Table 2 shows how the communal farmers in Zimbabwe have continued to expand their production of maize despite annual fluctuations. From 1980 to 2001, the annual production of maize in Zimbabwe had been well above 200,000 Metric tones with the exception of 1990 when it fell drastically to 1,585,800. This drastic reduction was mainly accounted by the low production in the commercial sector. The communal sector however, continued to witness a general expansion in maize production despite annual fluctuation and inefficient production.

Maize is not only a basic crop for household food security but also an important source of household cash income. Therefore, any trade arrangements, which allow the import of cheap subsidised maize at prices that undermine local prices, will depress rural household incomes. Thus, this needs to be seen against the background of an existing situation of rapidly escalating input costs in the agricultural sector. The escalating costs have hampered production and reduced the economic benefits of maize production as a cash earner. Consequently, any reduction in the maize price as a result of the availability of cheap imported maize would compound this situation.

Animal production

The commercial ranching sector of Zimbabwe provides a rare opportunity for estimating the efficiencies of extensive

Table 1. Commercial and communal area cotton production.

Year	Commercial sector		Communal sector	
	Production	Area	Production	Area
1969 to 1970	11 000	65 000	14 000	16 000
1975 to 1976	114 116	64 003	28 000	35 000
1980 to1981	125 594	66 054	45 000	59 000
1985 to 1986	153 162	76 617	98 000	115 000
1990 to 1991	123 151	77 222	137 900	197 000
1995 to 1996	73 070	40 000	157 584	217 620
1998 to 1999	76 630	52 950	188 350	274 500
2000 to 2001	51 713	37 473	234 400	353 000

Source: Adapted from APRODEV (2002).

Table 2. Maize production and area sown for some selected years.

	National		Communal		Commercial	
Years	Metric ton	Hectare	Metric ton	Hectare	Metric ton	Hectare
1969 to 1970	1,085,300	902,800	245,700	610,800	839,600	292,000
1975 to 1976	1,837,800	1,017,300	550,000	760,000	1,287,800	257,300
1980 to 1981	2,833,400	1,363,400	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,833,400	363,400
1985 to 1986	2,412,000	1,314,000	1,348,000	1,074,000	1,064,000	240,000
1990 to 1991	1,585,800	1,101,200	1,019,300	971,000	731,500	178,800
1995 to 1996	2,609,000	1,535,000	1,687,000	1,330,000	922,000	205,000
2000 to 2001	2,148,110	1,416,700	1,240,000	1,210,000	908,110	206,700

Source: Adapted from APRODEV, 2002.

extensive cattle and wildlife production systems. This is because there is a long history of commercial cattle ranching, and that landowners have the right to commercially use wildlife on their lands (Kreuter and Workman, 1996). In semi-arid African savannas, multi-species wildlife communities tend to use heterogeneous vegetation more completely than cattle alone (Kreuter and Workman, 1996). Although, erratic rainfall has generally restricted agricultural activities in these semi-arid regions; hence wildlife has been used commercially since 1970s.

Wildlife production may thus be the ecologically the most rational form of land use in these areas. Hence, wildlife that are common in Zimbabwe especially in the Midlands areas consists mainly of plains-game species but a few larger herbivores, like elephant, rhino, hippopotamuses, giraffe and buffalo. However, the most valuable game-species are leopard, eland, water buck, kudu, tsessebe, zebra, baboons, and different types of antelope (Kreuter and Workman, 1996; Newitt, 2007). Considering the importance of livestock, a unit known as Department of Livestock Production and Development was established in 2002. The department is responsible for general animal husbandry and consists of two divisions. The livestock production division supports animal production and is the livestock outreach arm. While livestock development and schemes division links up with technology transfer, multiplication and breeding of animals and forage, responsible for breeding nucleus heads, gene banks for fodder and grass as well as new initiatives.

Agricultural manpower

Given that agriculture is a key industry in the economy of Zimbabwe, a large number of the country's population depend directly or indirectly on land for their means of livelihood. For example, the industry provides employment for 70% of the Zimbabwean population with employment (Weiner, Moyo, Munslow and O'Keefe 1985; APRODEV, 2002). Further analysis shows that 71% of the total female population in Zimbabwe gain employment as communal area farmers, 20% are employed outside the subsistence sector, while 9% are classified as unemployed. The 20% of women employed outside the subsistence sector are involved in a wide variety of different occupations, such as casual laborers on commercial farms and in some instances as permanent laborers. A small minority are involved in farming under resettlement schemes.

According to Newitt (2007), Zimbabwe's total labor force

Table 3. Average of total exports to the European Union 1992-1996.

Product	Age of export (%)
Tobacco	28.2
Cut Flowers	5.2
Raw Cane Sugar	4.2
Cotton	4.1
Beef	3.5
Leather	1.8
Chilled Vegetable	1.7
Coffee	1.5
Fruit	1.8
Tea	0.8

Adapted from APRODEV (2002).

as at 2005 was put at 5.8 million people. Trade unions represent Zimbabwe's major industries and service sectors. All the unions are affiliated with the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, which was founded in 1981. Employers' associations are strong in the agricultural sector, particularly the Commercial Farmers' Union which was founded in 1942.

EXPORT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

After achieving independence in 1980, Zimbabwe joined the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) group and acceded to the Lome convention. Since then the country has been considering to benefit from the non-reciprocal trade preferences extended by European Union to ACP countries under the provision of the Cotonou Agreement (Table 3) . Indeed, EU is the major trading partner for Zimbabwe, accounting for about 35% of the country's export revenue. Zimbabwe has also benefited from the financial resources under the European Development Fund, for trade development projects targeting both regional and European markets. In addition, between 1980 and 1997 Zimbabwe was one of the 5 most successful ACP countries in taking advantage of the trade preferences made available under the Lomé Convention. At a point in time, Zimbabwe had problems in exporting its textile to South Africa and consequently, the EU provided an important alternative market for the product (APRODEV, 2002).

Zimbabwean agricultural exports to the European Union

Furthermore, it was observed (APRODEV, 2002) that the most important trade preferences for Zimbabwean exporters have been in the fields of agricultural, horticultural (fruit and vegetables) and floricultural (cut flowers) exports. During the period from 1992 to 1996 Zimbabwean agricultural, horticultural and floricultural exports accounted for 53.7% of exports to the EU. Therefore, it was estimated that output in the sugar sector alone provided an income transfer to Zimbabwe in 1998 of over 18 million EURO, an amount greater than the annual aid allocation to Zimbabwe under the Lomé Convention. Table 4 shows the statistics for horticultural and floricultural export for some selected years.

The production of both fruit and vegetables on one hand and that of cut flower on the other hand have steadily increased over the years. Hence, these products are being exported year in year out and they have been important source of foreign exchange earning. Cut flowers are produced on both large scale and small scale commercial farms, although export of quality flowers come almost exclusively from large scale commercial farms. The production of export quality cut flowers on communal area farms is not realistic, given the investments required and production methods used. Consequently, around 5% of land in the commercial farming sector is used for cut flowers, with a high concentration of cut flower farms in Mashonaland Central.

In tonnage terms horticultural exports grew 25 folds and there was corresponding 40- fold increase in the exchange earning. For example, cut flower alone grew 40 fold in terms of both tonnage exchange earnings. APRODEV (2002) pointed out that between 1985 and 1999 the cut flower sector expanded and rose from 88th most important export product to the 11th position. In a relatively short period Zimbabwe has become one of the major suppliers of cut flowers to the EU market. Remarkably, Zimbabwe is now the second largest cut flower exporter in Africa and the third largest supplier of cut flowers to the EU in the world. The factors which have contributed to this growth include significant margins of trade preference, favourable climatic conditions, a relatively well-educated work force, improvements in airfreight and private sector initiative.

Another important agricultural product is beef, the bulk of which is being exported to the EU market. Under the Beef Protocol of the Lomé Convention and subsequent Cotonou Agreement, Zimbabwe has been allocated a quota of 9,100 tonnes for the export of frozen and chilled de-boned beef. The utilization of this quota has varied considerably, from 5% to 178% (NEP STOFFBERY, MEATCO see APRODEV, 2002) . Traditionally this has been a consequence of two main developments: drought and the outbreak of animal diseases, with periodic foot and mouth disease outbreaks resulting in the complete closure of the EU market to Zimbabwean beef exports and drought affecting the availability and quality of beef cuts. Table 5 shows beef exports in from 1990 to 2001. Given the quota of 9,100 tonnes annually, the exports for the years under review can be said to have experienced a significant fluctuation. The export of the product reached the peak in 1994 and then continued to fluctuate downwards.

Table 4. Growth in cut flower and all horticultural exports.

	All horticulture		Cut flowers	
Year	Tonnes	'000 US $	Tonnes	'000 US $
1989 to 1990	14 475	24,665	2 872	13,211
1990 to 1991	14,237	31,908	3,722	17,121
1991 to 1992	18,042	37,984	4,758	21,885
1992 to 1993	18,205	39,003	5,206	23,948
1993 to 1994	25 972	47,248	5 770	26,541
1994 to 1995	39,084	75,606	9,095	41,839
1995 to 1996	45,831	92,262	11,630	53,497
1996 to 1997	53,625	103,205	13,832	63,628
1997 to 1998	55 677	110,797	14,729	67,753
1998 to 1999	77,644	142,689	18 411	84,692

Source: Adapted from APRODEV, 2002.

AGRICULTURAL TARIFFS AND TRADE-PROTECTION

Almost all the developing economies need protection barrier to establish. For instance all the European countries with the exception of United Kingdom, were able to develop under trade barriers of one sort or another. Indeed, the European countries went beyond mere tariff protection and selectively dissociated from the international economy (Dandago, 2005) . Similarly, Zimbabwe imposed some protective trade barriers in order to guard the economy against unfair international competition (Carmody, 1998; Brett, 2005). Agricultural price controls gave commercial farmers cheap credit and cost-plus prices, while food subsidies reduced urban food prices. Tariffs protected domestic industry from foreign competition. However, with the free trade understanding between Zimbabwe and the European Union, obviously these tariffs would be removed in this regard. The EU is one of Zimbabwe's major trading partners. The introduction of duty free access for imports from the EU results in a progressive reduction in government revenue from customs duties.

In addition, the Tariff Commission in Zimbabwe found that, while imports from the EU accounted for 20.9% of Zimbabwe's total imports, they generated 23.1% of total import duties collected. This situation arises since imports from the EU consist largely of manufactured products on which the tariffs charged are above the average. Indeed, the average effective rate of duty applied on imports from the EU over the period 1998 to 2000 was 6.1% compared to an average effective rate of duty on total imports from the whole world of 5.51%.

CONTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURE TO THE ECONOMY

Agricultural industry is the mainstay of Zimbabwe's economy and largely influences the economic, social and political lives of the majority of the people of Zimbabwe. The industry contributes only 11 - 14% of the GDP. Agriculture provides 45% of the country's exports, 60% of all raw materials used by Zimbabwean industry and employment for 70% of the Zimbabwean population (Weiner, Moyo, Munslow and O'Keefe 1985; APRODEV, 2002). However, Newitt (2007) argue that in 2005 agriculture (including forestry and fishing) accounted for 18% of GDP. In any case the industry is significantly contributing in the Zimbabwean economy. It has been argued by Cliffe (1988) that despite some limitations, setbacks and challenges Zimbabwean agricultural industry is a success to some extent. According to him Zimbabwe's track record should be copied in promoting agricultural production. Therefore, the country has succeeded in producing food surpluses in most years and its communal sector substantially contributes to commercial production since 1980.

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Training, development and extension services are greatly presumed to have a positive impact on both the quality and the quantity of agricultural products. In addition, engaging in these activities ensure effective and efficient agricultural production. Many countries recognize that ensuring an effective agricultural extension system is critical, especially in view of the major challenges facing agricultural sector in the contemporary time globally (Umali- Deininger, 1997) . To this extent, Zimbabwe is not left out in the provision of agricultural training, development and extension services. Hence, Chasi (2003) observes that Zimbabwe public research institution achievements are noted and well documented, none the less shortcomings are also apparent particularly in the early 1990s.

Furthermore, knowledge services for farmers are critical for enhancing productivity. Thus the public sector

Table 5. Annual export of beef in tonnes.

Year	Annual exports
1990	400
1991	1,800
1992	8,327
1993	9,100
1994	16,242
1995	10,742
1996	7,753
1997	7,825
1998	5,986
1999	7,825
2000	8,266
2001	2,680

Adapted from APRODEV (2002).

provides the bulk of the extension services; however, limitations were noted in the1990s, the performance of extension weakened with increasing fiscal constraints whilst services covered too wide an area and range of activities amidst poor linkages with research. Institutional based training is carried out in a variety of public and private institutions. Table 6 shows the range of public and private institutions in an attempt to quantify the annual output and profile of the graduates from the various institutions. The capacity of formal training institutions is limited by the educational facilities available (e.g. accommodation, size of classes, books and budgets) in universities and colleges (Table 7). The case of Africa University undergraduate's intake trends confirms the fluctuation on an annual basis or per semester. However, the indication from the rapid survey (Chasi, 2003) shows that the fast track has benefited people with formal agricultural training, the case of a new farmer with Ph.D. in Agriculture illustrates the point. Similarly, adult education is one of the ways through which farmers receive agricultural knowledge. In this vein, the Study Circle Alliance of Zimbabwe has been formed to promote the study circle concept where people learn and experiment on their own based on distribution and dissemination of self-study materials. Farmers learn farming and conservation through correspondence at village and ward level farming schools. Despite these attempts 60% of the farmers that grow crops they have not been trained to produce.

Moreover, community radio programs have been used as an extension strategy by the Department of Agricultural Research and Extension (AREX). This medium is significantly used in disseminating information to the local farmers and its effectiveness varied from place to place. It was found in Angwa survey that 90% or more farmers, access information through the radio.

The concept of community radio stations, Tele-centers and information centers for farmers is yet to develop in Zimbabwe. However, Chasi (2003) suggests that the information kiosk initiative by Ministry of Information would fill in this gap.

In spite of all the attempts in the areas of training, development and extension services, Chasi (2003) identified a number of constraints being faced. For instance, there is a limited capacity of formal training institutions to meet demand in the short term. The universities and colleges may not meet the market demand for qualified agriculturalists or appropriate manpower needs. Second constrain has to do with the appropriateness and relevance of curriculum, knowledge generated and research at training institutions. For instance, training institutions fail to expose undergraduates to practical production issues of relevance to the farmer real world circumstances.

LAND USE/LAND REFORM IN ZIMBABWE

Land is widely regarded as central to the politics and history of both colonial and post colonial Zimbabwe. Hence, land was the core issue over which the liberation struggle was waged (Cheater, 1990). Pressure on land as observed by Andersson (1999) is common in many parts of Zimbabwe communal areas, and it is thus, not surprising that conflicts erupt over the use of the agricultural resource in these areas. There are three categories of land in Zimbabwe; communal, freehold and state land. Cheater (1990) observes that there is highly skewed distribution of the country's population over the total land mass. Approximately 20% of the population lives in urban centers of over 10,000 people, the majority of these in the major cities of Harare and Bulawawo. While 60% of the population lives in the communal lands, which cover a little over 40% of the total land area; the remaining 20% is dispersed on the state-own land, small and large freehold farms. This skewed population distribution which is as a result of colonial land legislation has therefore, provided the political rationale for land reform and redistribution. However, the repossession of the white-owned farms for redistribution to the marginalized majority black population has attracted serious attention, debates and protests (Mbiba, 2001; Moyo et al., 2000).

During the colonial period, land policies in Zimbabwe were in favor the white minority. Hence the racial division of land was done in a highly unequal manner between the European farmers and the native farmers (Moyo et al., 2000). In addition, Andersson (1999) and Potts (2000) posited that this segregationist policies of the colonial government concentrated Africans on marginal lands and the white majority control the best lands. Consequently, there is a high pressure on land in the communal areas which more often leads to serious disputes among people. Perhaps this perceived unequal land distribution led to a radical land policy by the post colonial government.

According to Newitt (2007), in 1997 Mugabe announced a controversial program of land redistribution.

Table 6. Output of institutional based training programmes.

University	Current range of intake per year	Planned maximum intake in the future
Africa University	25–46	50
University of Zimbabwe	500	500
Midlands University	80 - 120	120
Bindura University	30 - 39	80
Women's University in Africa	20 - 22	50
Open University of Agriculture	200 - 500	500
Total	855 – 1,227	1300

Source: Adapted from Agricultural Productivity Enhancement and Efficient Management of Resources in Zimbabwe, (2003).

Table 7. Annual output of agricultural oriented colleges.

Colleges	Number of full time graduates per year	Number of part time graduates per year
Chibero Agriculture	60	Variable
Gwebi Agriculture	60	Variable
Mlezu Agriculture	60-80	Variable
Esigodini Agriculture	60-80	Variable
Mazoe / Henderson (veterinary)	25	Variable
Rio Tinto Agriculture	60	Variable
Total	325-360	Variable

Source: Adapted from Agricultural Productivity Enhancement and Efficient Management of Resources in Zimbabwe, (2003).

land redistribution. This followed the unequal distribution and domination of farmlands by the white people during the colonial period. Now hundreds of commercial farms that are owned by the white-people making up nearly half of Zimbabwe's total commercial farmland were designated to be seized without compensation and divided among blacks that either do not have any land at all or have only small landholdings. Faced with strong protests by white farmers and the international community, the Zimbabwean government retreated from this position. However, Mugabe later went ahead and seized most of the white-owned farms and redistributed it to the landless native (Mbiba, 2001). This led to the fled away of a large number of white farmers from the country which consequently resulted to the virtual collapse of commercial farming in Zimbabwe.

CHALLENGES OF AGRICULTURE IN ZIMBABWE

Rapidly growing populations have astronomically increase the need for food, and the food-producing capacity in many countries is increasingly constrained both by diminishing opportunities to bring new land into production and by the declining productivity of over-cultivated areas caused by natural resource degradation (Umali-Deininger, 1997). This trend is not different with the present situation in Zimbabwe. Consequently, agricultural sector in the country is facing a lot of major challenges that need to be tackled squarely.

Additionally, animal disease is a major challenge in Zimbabwe. The periodic outbreak of food and mouth disease which normally leads to the ban of the country's beef meant for exportation to the European Union market (APRODEV, 2002) (Table 3). Animal disease could presumably lead to direct losses, either from the death or illness of affected animals. It could also lead to the loss or decrease in production levels. Similarly, animal disease could results in high indirect cost such as, cost of diagnostic testing or surveillance to detect the disease, or the further spread of the disease. Trace backs on animal movement, the implementation and maintenance of road closures, stop movements and quarantines as well as the depopulation costs and indemnity paid to the farmer, overtime costs for law enforcement and hiring additional veterinarians mean more costs.

Another challenge is that of food insecurity. Although, Zimbabwe used to be largely self reliant in the production of staple food, but recently in 1998 the country witness violent food riots for 3 days (The economist see Chattopadhyay, 2000). Hence, in his study Chattopadhyay (2000) notes that Structural Adjustment Program resulted into destitution which further increased food insecurity by eroding the purchasing power of large section of the population. The incidence of poverty is high in Zimbabwe more especially in the rural areas. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare in 1995 classified 62% of the rural population as very poor, while 21% of the urban population was classified as poor, with a quarter of this

number being very poor (APRODEV, 2002). Given that most of the rural dwellers are faced with a high incidence of poverty and they largely depend on agriculture for their livelihood, thus it could be argued that there is high dependency of poor people on agriculture. Similarly Umali-Deininger (1997) observes that significant majority of the poor continue to depend on agriculture for most of their livelihood. Just like some other African countries, Zimbabwe is also facing the challenge of human disease. The HIV/AIDS infection is on the increase day by day. Other diseases disturbing the country include cholera and malaria (Sachs, 2005). These could have negative impact on the agricultural workforce and consequently affect the productivity in the sector.

CONCLUSION

Because of its highly productive land and vast agricultural potentialities, Zimbabwe used to be not only self-sufficient but also produce surplus crops for exports. However, the situation has changed in the recent years to the extent that the country can no longer feed itself and has to depend on foreign aids. This problem is to a great extent caused by the so-called Structural Adjustment Program promoted by the World Bank; and partly by the political turmoil which resulted in the imposition of different types of sanctions on the country. Consequently, the Zimbabwean agricultural system becomes weak and weaker. It is however, expected that these negative phenomena could be successfully turnaround and changed for the better. But without selfless and focus leadership, this change will be mere a mirage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the challenges mentioned above, the following policy recommendations are hereby offered:

1. The menace of animal disease could be curbed or totally eliminated by further empowering the extension workers on educating and advising farmers on how to guard against diseases like foot and mouth. In addition, there is need to generate more information based on research in response to the different problems farmers are facing, alternatives should be identified to circumvent production difficulties due to such constraints as shortage of inputs. Hence, the communal farmers should be empowered and given modern implements for farming and be encouraged to produce on large scale basis. These will go a long way in checking food famine that has been witnessed in the recent years.
2. Political leaders should think very well before accepting any economic policy from the World Bank or IMF. This is because, some of these programs can cause more harm than good in the economy of developing nations. And the disastrous effects of the programs are obvious in Zimbabwe in particular and some other African countries like Nigeria.
3. As for the challenge of poverty, the government should endeavor to revive and strengthen the industrial sector because it is the key sector responsible for the growth and development of any economy. However, it is only with a strong agricultural base that viable agro-allied industries could be set-up/established and the poverty effectively tackled.

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