

The Impact of Climate Change on Agricultural Risks in Southern Africa: A Case Study of Mutoko District, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Agricultural production in rural Zimbabwe is severely constrained by climate change. This paper investigates the impact of climate change on agricultural risks in rural Zimbabwe, focusing specifically on changes in temperature and precipitation patterns as well as increased frequency of extreme weather events. This study utilized a qualitative methodology to discern the understanding of local farmers concerning climate change adaptation on agricultural risks. The study employed in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as data collection instruments. Purposive sampling was employed to select twenty (20) small-scale farmers and ten (10) key informants, namely agricultural specialists, agronomy experts, and local leadership in particular leaders from crops-related committees based on ward structures within the agriculture and rural development sectors of Mutoko district. The study found that agriculture risks in the district are exacerbated due to factors such as decreased crop yields and increased pest or disease incidence that worsen food insecurity. The study concludes that due to insufficient institutional support for rural communities in Zimbabwe, adaptation efforts towards climate change impacts on agriculture tend not to yield anticipated outcomes. The paper recommends adaptive approaches to reduce agricultural risks and increase agricultural resiliency in the district.