

Land Reform and Grain Production: The Case of Emerging Farmers in Qwaqwa, South Africa

Hennie Claassen, Geoffrey Mukwada, Merle Naidoo and Pululu Mahasa

*Department of Geography, University of the Free State, QwaQwa Campus,
Phuthaditjhaba 9866, South Africa*

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ABSTRACT In the developing world, land reform is considered as a crucial feature of economic development. While the objectives of land reform may be attractive, achieving them is only possible if the beneficiaries of the process are sufficiently equipped and supported. In South Africa an important objective of land reform is the attainment of food security. This research paper examines the challenges that emerging farmers are experiencing in grain production in the QwaQwa area in the eastern Free State of South Africa. The farmers were allocated land during the apartheid era in a prime grain producing region. Interviews were held with farmer organizations, agricultural extension officers, private companies, as well as ten randomly selected emerging farmers, to establish the major constraints that undermine grain production in the emerging farming sector. The results of the study indicate that the challenges constraining emerging farmers in grain production are linked to the prevailing demographic conditions such as age, the skills and training that the farmers have and lack of agricultural resources. The study concludes that the criteria for selecting land reform beneficiaries' needs to be re-evaluated if emerging farmers are to make a more significant contribution to food security in the country.