

Debunking Myths About Agriculture & Nutrition

Findings from the World Bank report *Productive Diversification in African Agriculture and Its Effects on Resilience and Nutrition*

Lesotho 2018

Q1. What does food security mean?

- a) A country produces enough food in kcal to feed all its inhabitants, e.g. enough cereals.
- b) There is enough food in a country, including imports, to feed its population, e.g. enough cereals.
- c) Everyone in a country has at any time access to enough food for his or her individual energy requirement (either through production or purchase).
- d) Everyone in a country has at any time access to sufficient, nutritious, and safe food to meet his or her dietary need.
- e) All of the above.

FAO's and the International Community's definition of food security:

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

(Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)

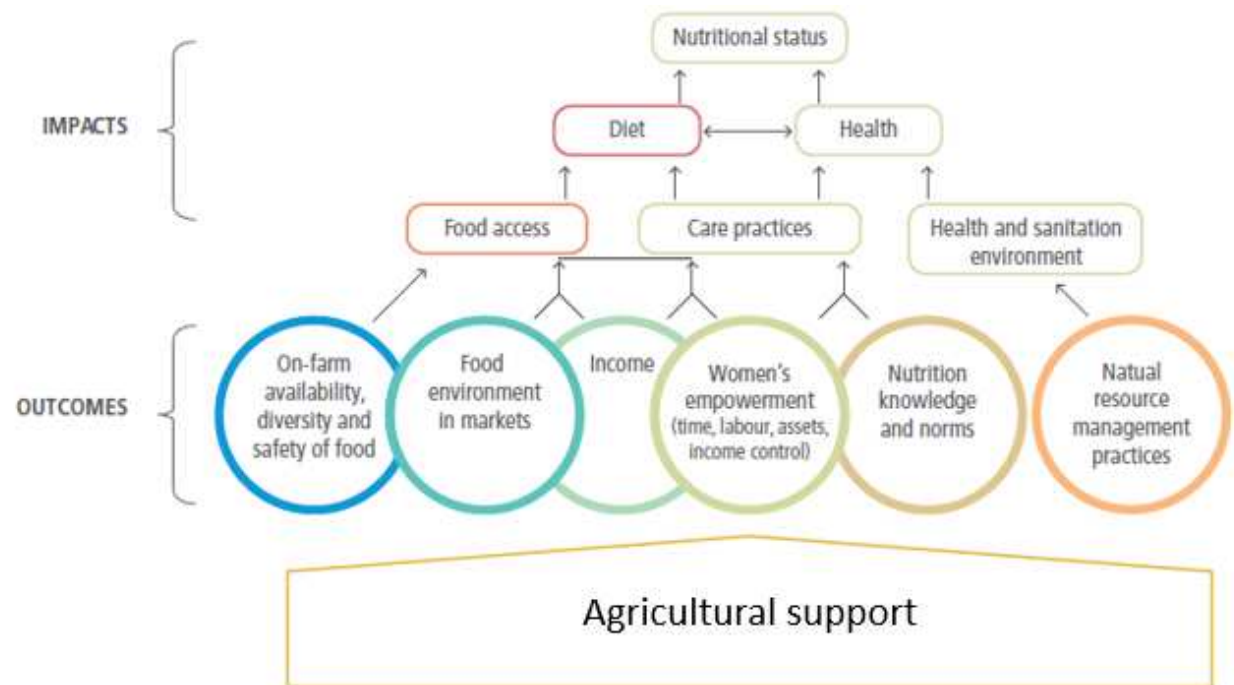


Q2. How can agricultural production support food security and nutrition?

- a) Farmers should specialize in cereals so that they have enough for their household needs, as well as to promote national self-sufficiency.
- b) By providing diverse, nutritious, and affordable food for the local food environment.
- c) By increasing incomes among farmers, thereby allowing access to food markets and promoting resilience.
- d) By creating a healthy and resilient agro-ecosystem that allows for stable food production.
- e) b), c), and d)
- f) All of the above.

Agricultural production needs to be diverse to support nutrition in Africa

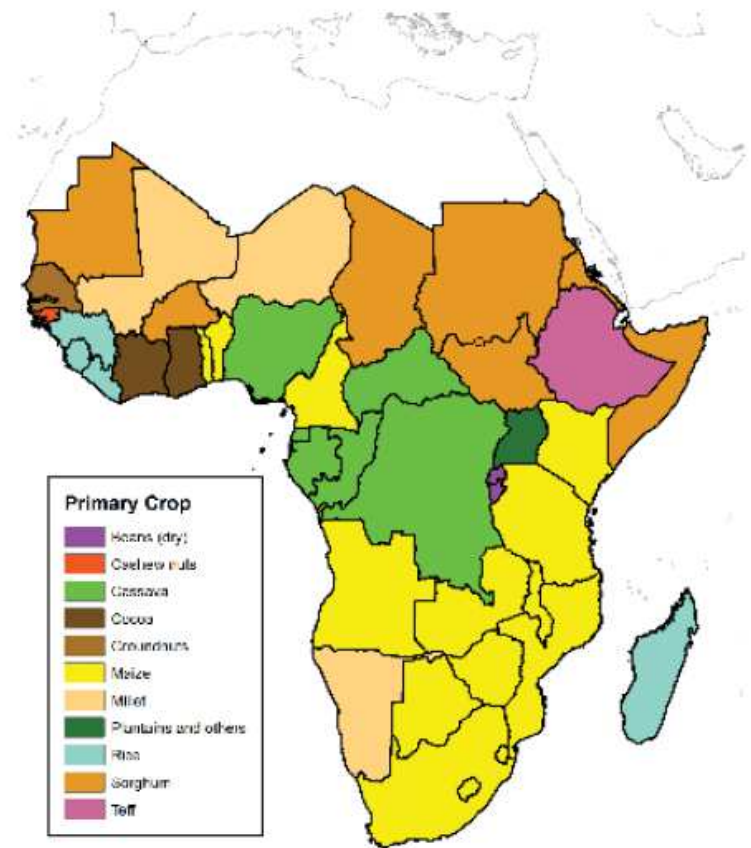
- Diverse production systems can make ecosystems more productive and resilient.
- Diverse production is crucial for creating a diverse food environment and supplying markets with nutritious food.
- Productive and resilient agriculture provide incomes to farmers.
- BUT nutrition knowledge is central to promote good nutrition!



Source: Herforth and Ballard, 2016.⁶

In reality....

- Maize, ground nuts, and cassava are the most common crops in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Public policies, such as input subsidies and market interventions for key strategic cereal crops have driven agricultural specialization in a few staple crops across the continent.
- Maize and rice account for about half the dietary energy intake in several countries in Africa.



Source: FAOSTAT data for 2009-2014.

Q3. To support nutritious food systems, agricultural policies should:

- a) Provide subsidies for strategic food crops, e.g. important cereals such as maize and rice.
- b) Conduct market interventions and public purchases of key strategic crops to provide stable markets and incomes for farmers.
- c) Strengthen the links between public policies in nutrition, agriculture, and environment, and provide related advisory services to farmers.
- d) Support women's access to productive assets and income generating activities.
- e) Invest in research and development.
- f) Invest in irrigation and market infrastructure.
- g) a) and b)
- h) c), d), e), and f)
- i) All of the above.

Agricultural policies for nutrition in Africa

- Should focus on creating diverse food environments - not one size fits all!
- Should create a general enabling environment for farmers and address specific market failures with clear exist strategies, rather than promoting broad market interventions for specific commodities.
- Public investments should focus on broad research, extension, and public infrastructure in rural areas, including investments that promote diverse market development and market access.
- Intensify nutritional awareness, advocacy, and educational programs through cross-sectoral collaboration to maximize production and consumption of nutritious foods.

Q4. What drives diversification among farmers?

- a) Larger farms tend to be more diversified.
- b) Long growing seasons are conducive for on-farm diversification.
- c) Relatively short proximity to markets supports specialization.
- d) Access to advisory services and technology make farmers specialize and achieve economies of scale.
- e) Enhanced knowledge and awareness of nutrition and healthy food.
- f) All of the above depending on the context.

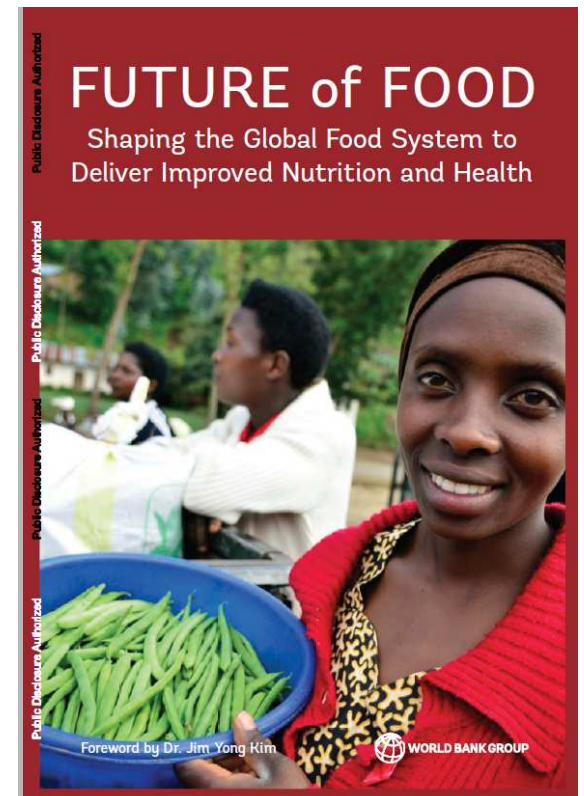
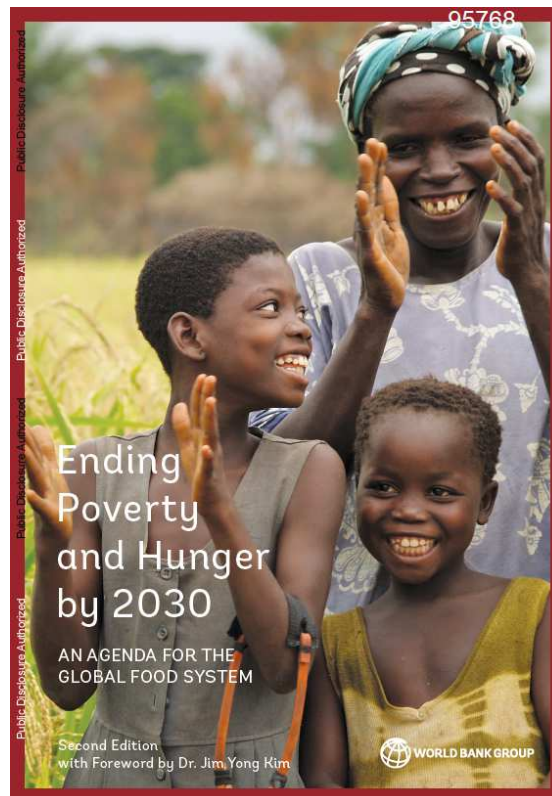
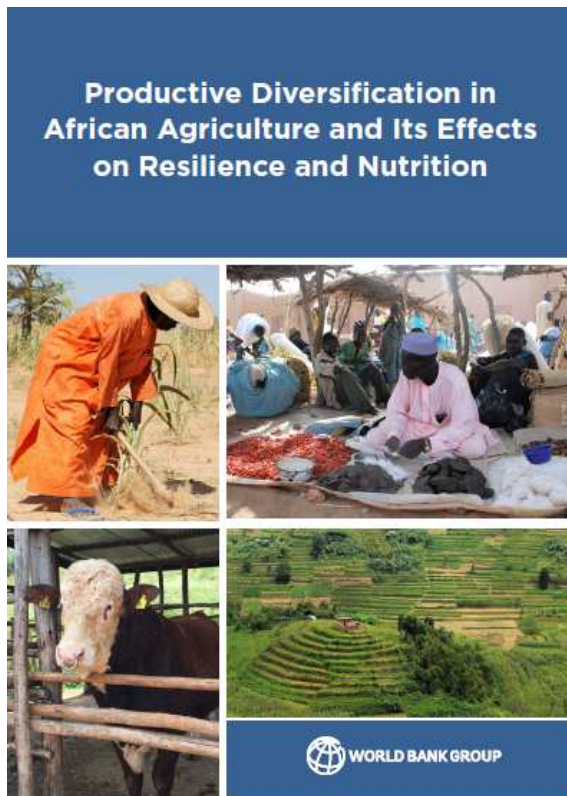


Drivers of diverse agricultural production for nutrition in Africa

- Many different drivers of diverse agricultural production system and often not linear – depend on the context in which the farmer operates.
- Market access – for consumption and production.
- There is in some cases a tipping point.
- Agricultural policies have significant impacts and create the context that the farmer makes decisions in.
- Knowledge and education are important.

		On-farm diversification	On-farm specialization
ENVIRONMENTAL DRIVERS	Long growing season	●	●
	Poor environmental conditions and soils	●	●
	Climate shocks and other agricultural risks	●	●
POLICY AND MARKET DRIVERS	Subsidies and incentives	●	●
	Price volatility and regulatory changes	●	●
	Market infrastructure	●	●
	Access to services and technologies	●	●
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DRIVERS	Availability of labor	●	●
	Small land size tenure insecurity	●	●
	Lack of education and gender equity	●	●
	Knowledge and awareness about the nutritional value of food	●	●
	Stable market access through vertical coordination	●	●
	Community support and power structures	●	●

THANK YOU!



Find our more at: www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture