



Evaluation of the WCDOA's Commodity Approach

Poster Presentation

African Evidence Network Conference 2016

Final

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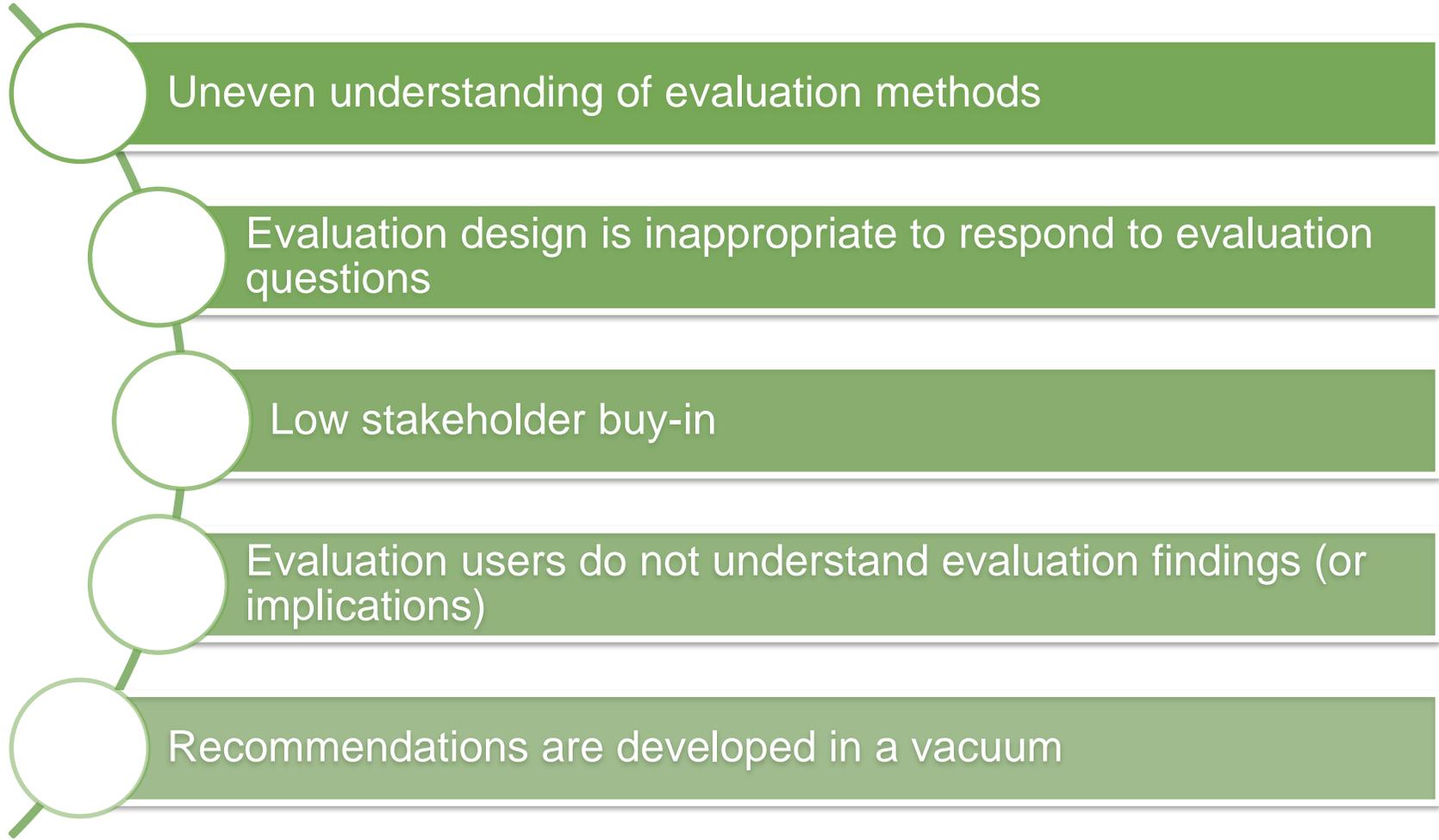
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Introduction

Common pitfalls diminishing evaluation use

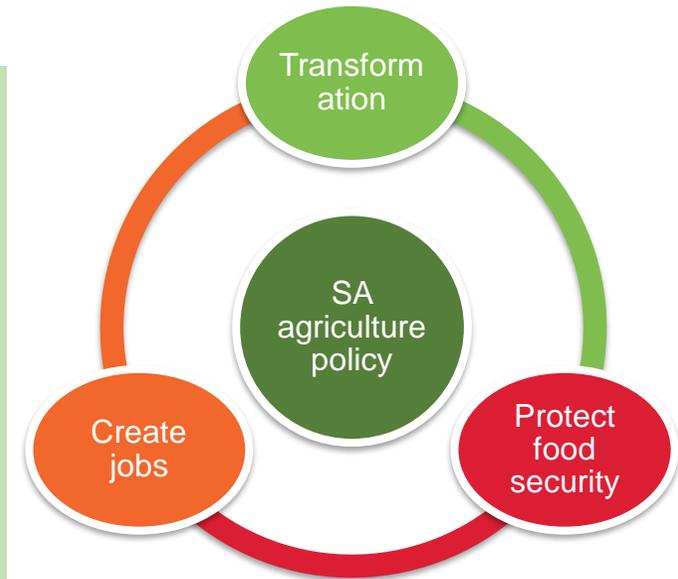


Introduction

Background to the evaluation

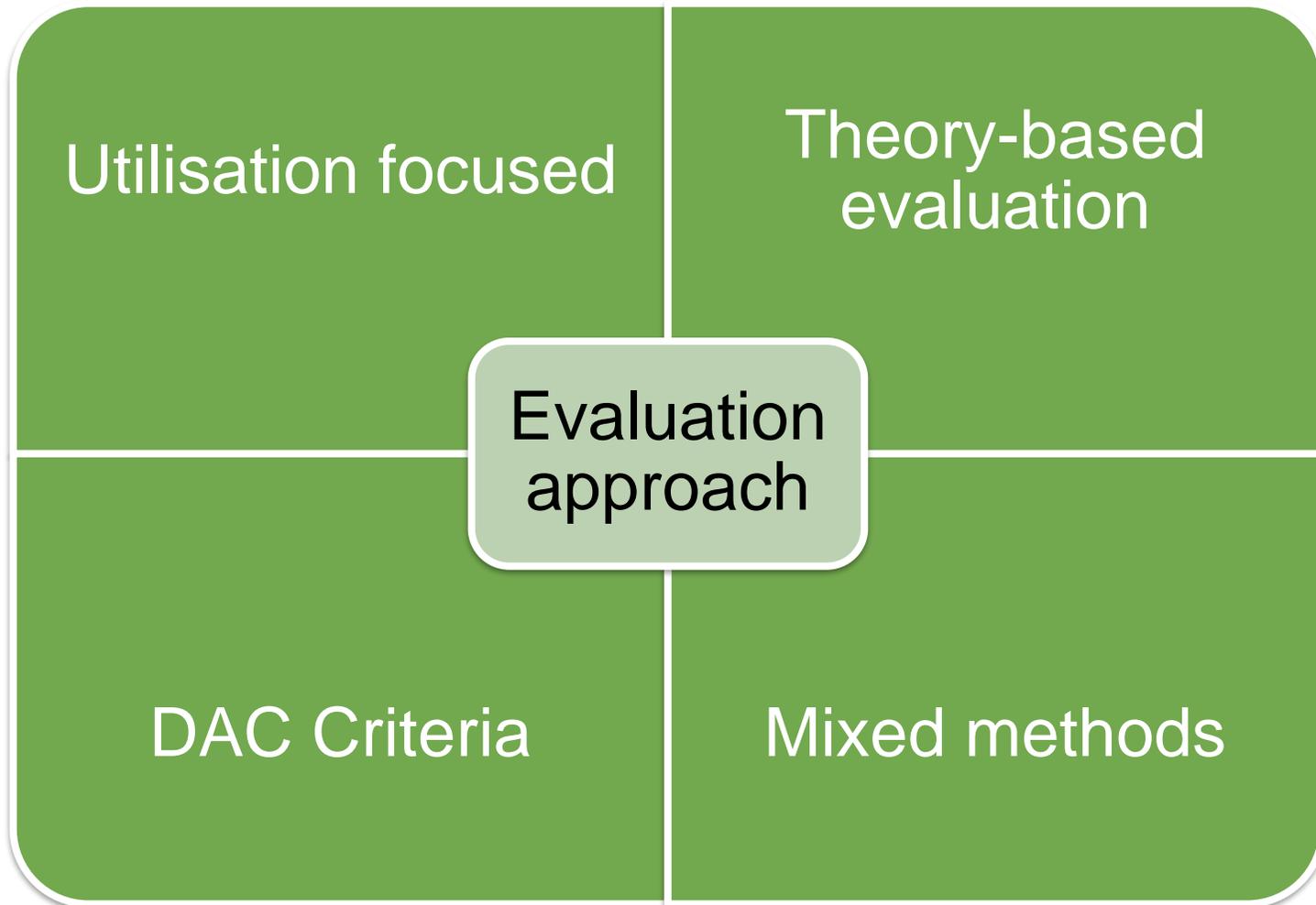
Evaluation context

- Western Cape has high value, potentially high yield agricultural land.
- Commodity Approach is focused on agricultural produce with high commercial value and high labour intensity.
- Deployment of grant funding to support smallholders and emerging black commercial farmers through:
 - Access to inputs
 - Access to markets
 - Technical assistance and mentorship
 - Access to infrastructure and equipment



The objective of the evaluation is to:

- Determine the extent to which the programme makes a difference in the development of smallholder farmers
- Identify unintended and indirect outcomes of the programme
- Analyse the key interventions and their contribution to the outcomes
- Develop recommendations for the improvement of programme design and implementation

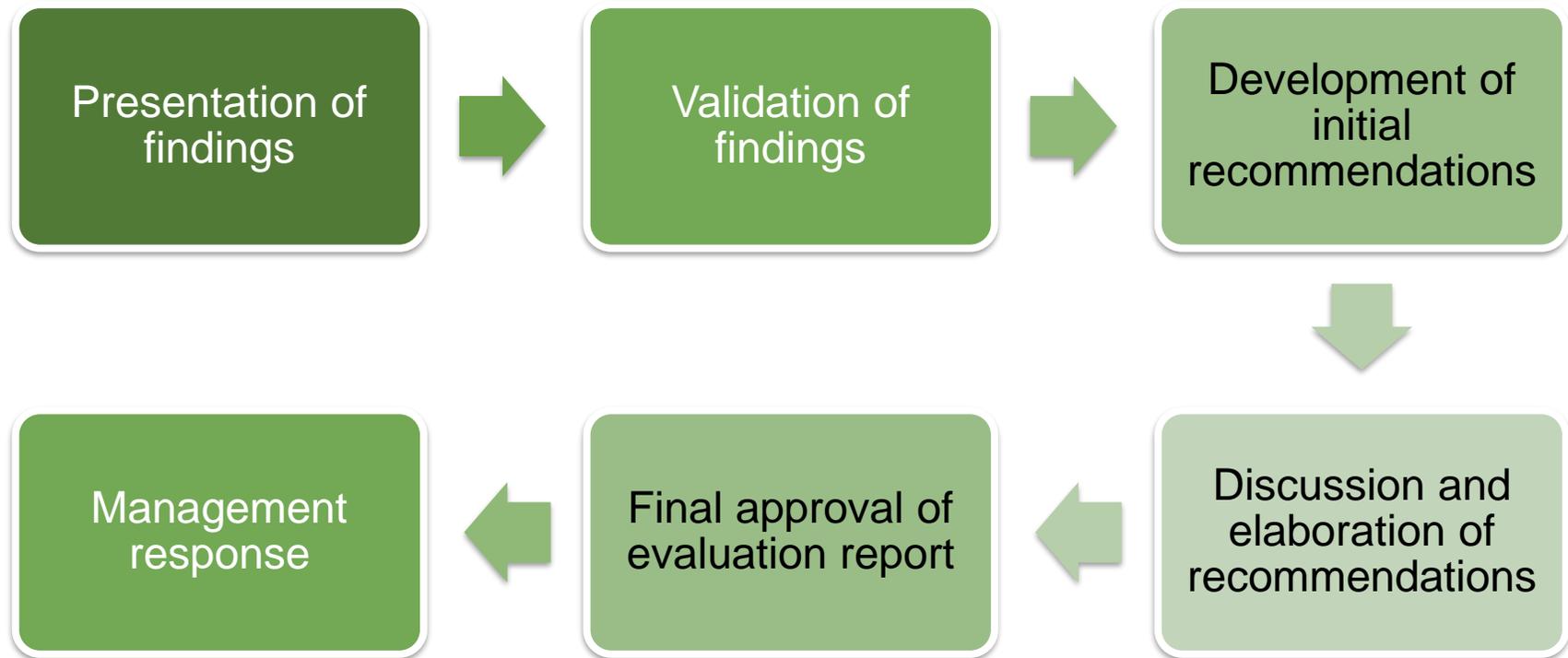


Evaluation approach and method

Supporting evidence-informed decision-making



Evaluation approach and methods
Promoting a utilisation-focused evaluation



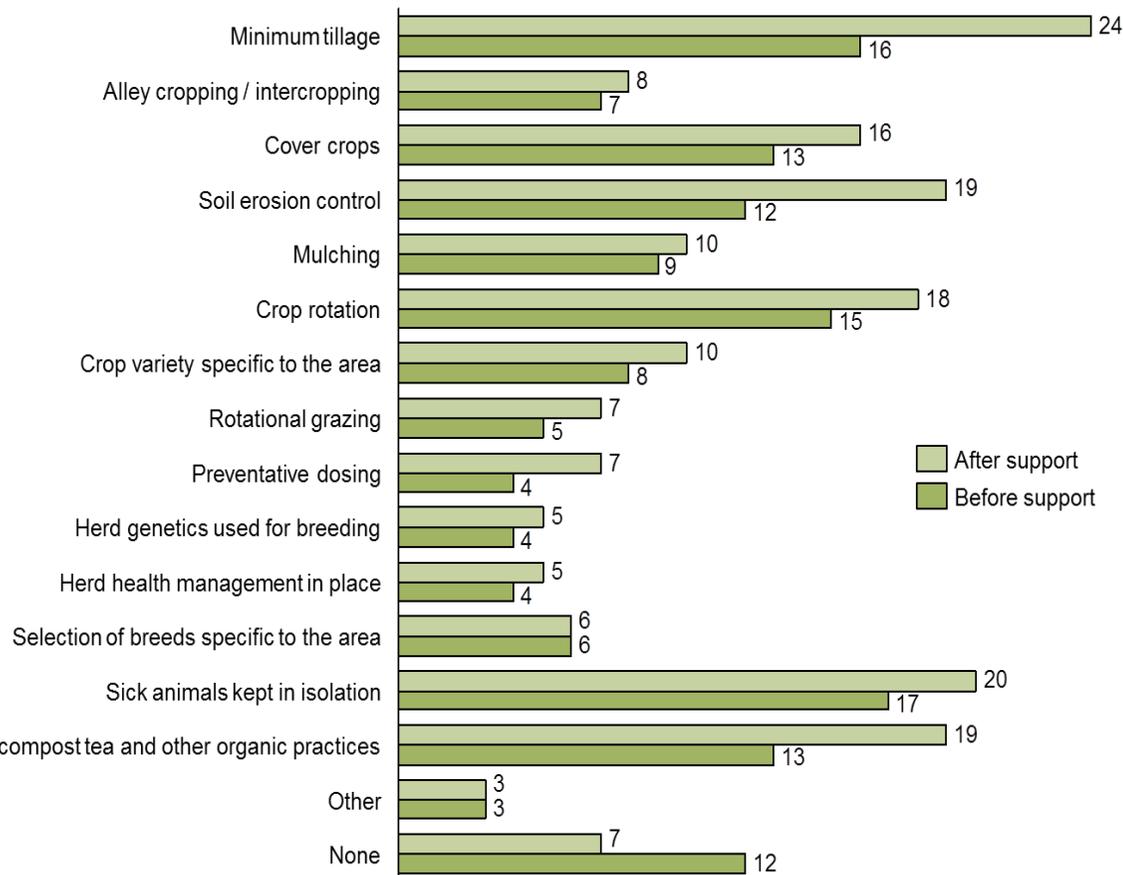
Our focus was to develop recommendations based on the evidence from the evaluation. Additionally, recommendations had to be reflective of the context and practical.

Evaluation results

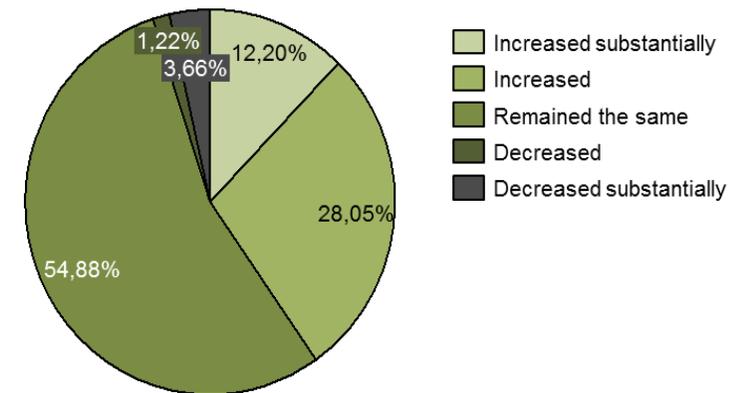
To what extent has the Commodity Approach contributed to productivity of farmers?

- Better, more sustainable farming practices, higher quality inputs, and increased mechanisation contributes towards improved productivity.
- However longer timeframes are required to see notable changes in productivity.
- Evidence of this where there has been multiple years of support.

Change in farming practice



Change in land use intensity



Key informants: Improved farming practices are likely to result in productivity over the medium term.

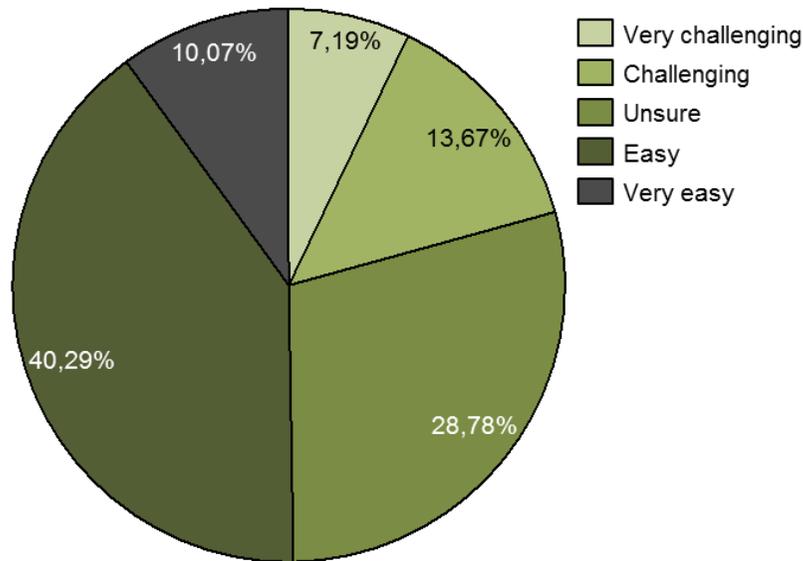
Commodity industry representatives: Timeframes are too short to see changes in productivity.

Evaluation results

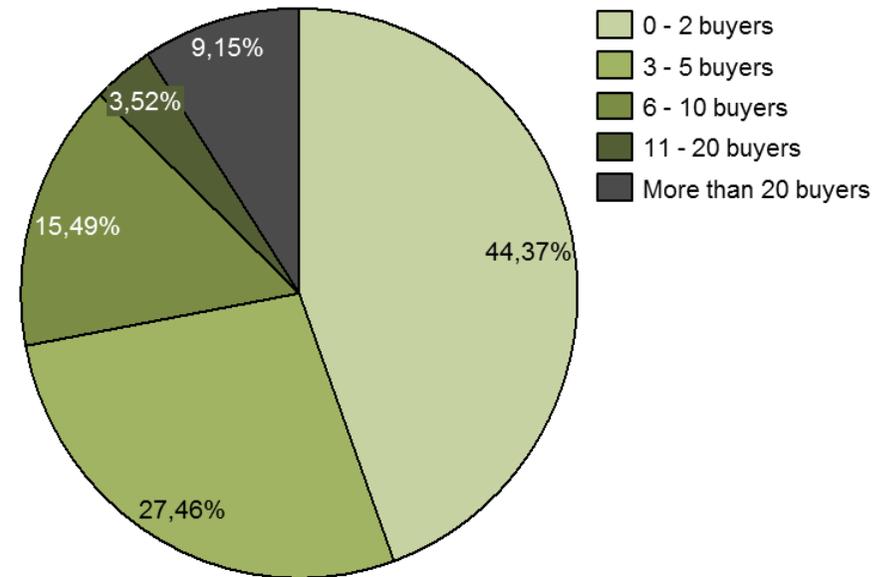
To what extent has the Commodity Approach contributed to market access by the farmers?

- Limited direct contribution to market access as many of the market access arrangements were in place prior to the support
- Considerable indirect contribution to market access through improved produce quality and more market-oriented cultivars

Ease of selling produce



Number of buyers



Projects typically had markets and off-take agreements in place prior to support. Therefore, the Commodity Approach's contribution to securing and maintaining markets is indirect, resulting from improvements in product quality.

Evaluation results

Has the approach contributed to the 'graduation' of smallholder farmers to commercial agriculture?

- Graduation' refers to the increased commercial orientation and commercial success of farming activities.
- Potential exists to graduate farmers through improved productivity, links to markets and potential to leverage funding.
- However, the size of the land and therefore size of the enterprise, is a main driver of sustainability.
- Economies of scale is a key consideration for graduation of farmers

The proposed ceiling for a small-scale farm is 1 000 hectares. With this amount of land, one would be able to sell less than 100 lambs per year. As such, the farmer's income per month would be approximately R3 500. However, if the farmer had just one employee, paid minimum wage, then the farm worker would earn more than the land owner, which with the expenses of farming and living would be unsustainable."

Key informant, Department of Agriculture

"Without the funding, this project would not have happened. The vineyards are only getting older, costs are going up, and wine prices have not changed so there is no way that this project would have been possible without this funding."

Grape farmer, Somerset West

Evaluation results

Recommendations (1)

Package of project support should be designed to facilitate farmers' **graduation** to increase commercial orientation and commercial success.

- Period of support longer than one year and should account for natural business cycle.
- Renewal of support should be contingent on achievement of results.
- Explore linkages to private sector financiers and possible co-contributions from larger projects.
- Business plans should include financial projections to assess how assistance received will lead to commercial results.
- Business plans should have both agronomic and extension officer input.

Encourage **aggregation**

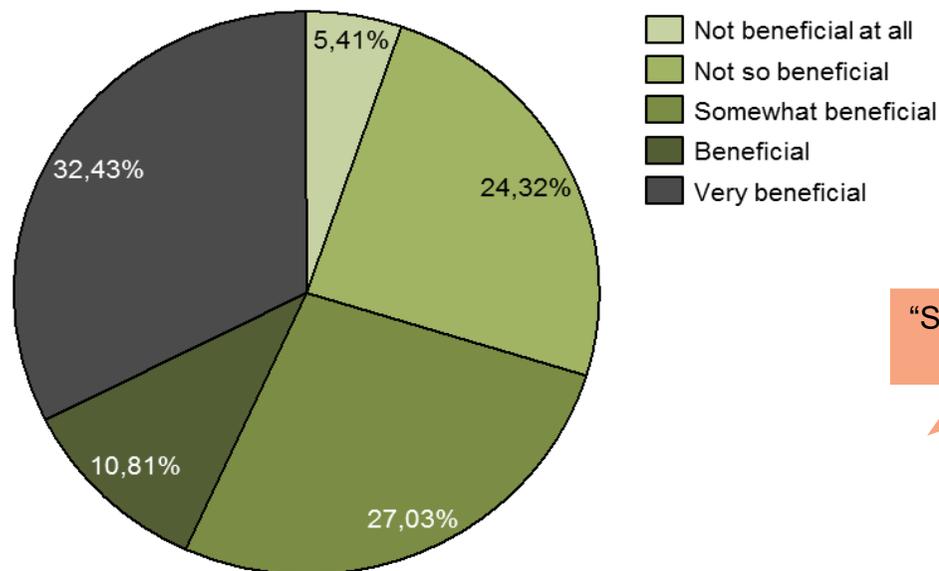
- Combined purchase of inputs / sale of produce
- Sharing equipment, infrastructure
- Improve coordination with other government programmes
- Facilitate access to capital

Evaluation results

What is the contribution of the mentorship programme to the farming operations?

- Considerable variation in the experiences of the mentorship programme, depending on the mentor him/herself, the project and the 'need' for this mentorship
- Illustrative of the broad nature of the mentorship agreement – completed on a case by case basis
- Positive changes in emerging farmers' confidence and feeling of empowerment – unclear if this is attributable to mentorship programme
- Technical advice provided by the mentorship programme is perceived to be less useful than business and administrative training

Experience of the mentorship programme



“The mentor is also a farmer, so he will always do his activities first. This cannot happen with farming, where we are so dependent on the seasons and timing.”
Smallholder pig farmer

“Supportive and beneficial.”
Mohair farmer

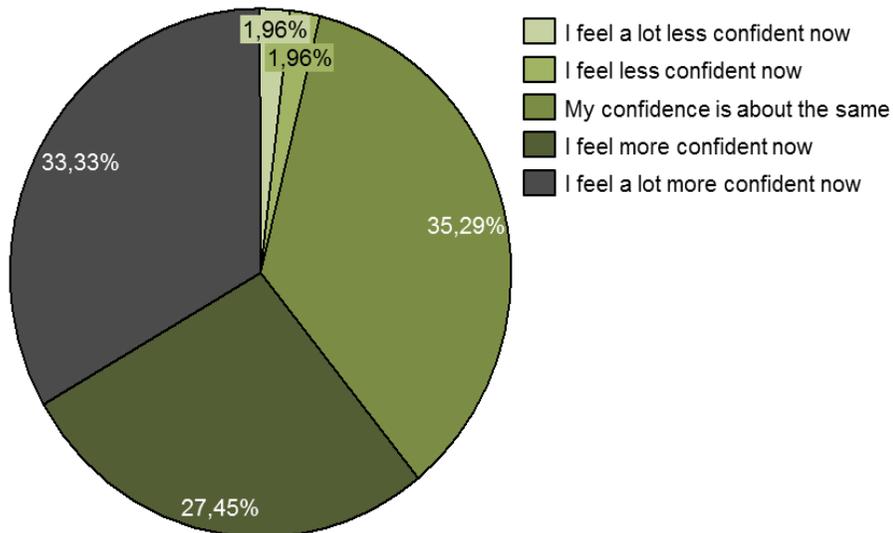
“He also doesn't have a huge amount of experience and is also busy so can't come here all the time.”
Vegetable farmer

Evaluation results

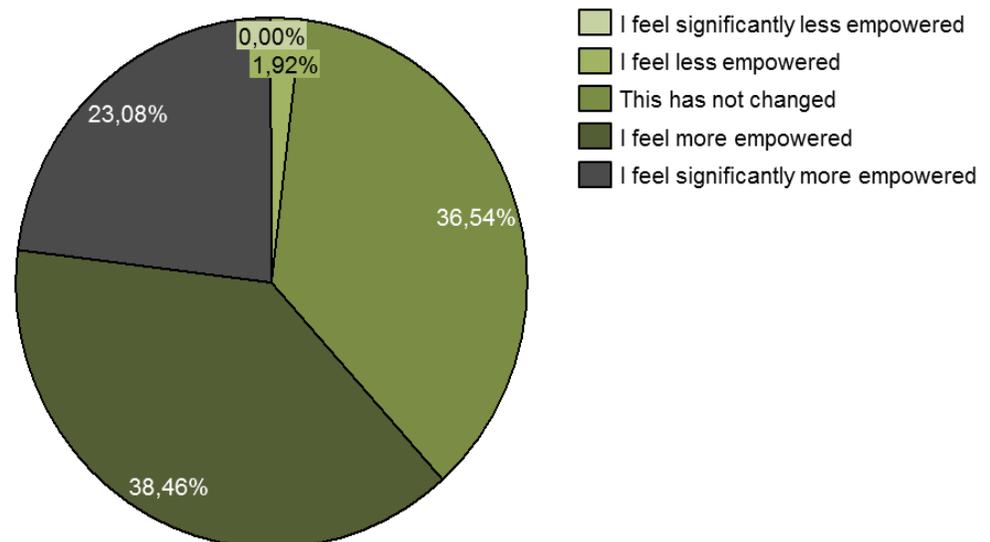
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Confidence in farming practices after Commodity Approach



Feeling of empowerment after Commodity Approach



Evaluation results

Recommendations (2)

Standardise and improve **the mentorship** programme

- Mentorship should extend beyond the technical aspects of farming to include business and administration training.
- Redesign selection and allocation process to match mentor skills and experience with beneficiary needs
- Recruit a diversity of mentors
- Standardise mentor programme and document expectations
- Remunerate mentors to incentivise high quality services

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