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What makes agricultural support systems successful?

Lessons from Senegal on Productivity, Targeting and Catalytic Investment

During the recent AFIDA–ANAPRI Policy Dialogue on "Crowding In or Crowding Out? Rethinking Fertiliser Subsidies for Agricultural Transformation," researchers and policy experts examined how agricultural support programmes can stimulate productivity, strengthen markets and contribute to long-term agricultural transformation.

Among the presenters was Dr Omar Diouf of the Senegalese Institute for Agricultural Research (ISRA -BAME), who shared evidence from Senegal on how programme design, implementation and local economic conditions influence the effectiveness of agricultural subsidies. In this article, he draws on these findings to explore what makes agricultural support systems work and the lessons they offer for policymakers across Africa.

More Spending Does Not Guarantee Better Results

During Senegal's 2025–2026 agricultural season, the government allocated CFAF 120 billion to agricultural subsidies. Economic modelling by ISRA-BAME estimates a multiplier of 1.52 and a 0.39% contribution to GDP growth, suggesting positive effects across the wider economy.

However, these potential gains are constrained by persistent challenges, including delayed input delivery, inconsistent seed quality and weaknesses in beneficiary targeting. The effectiveness of agricultural support therefore depends not only on the resources committed, but also on how well programmes are designed and implemented.

The Same Subsidy Can Produce Different Outcomes

A survey of 1,200 farmers, conducted in collaboration with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, reveals important differences between two agroecological zones in Senegal.

In the Groundnut Basin, beneficiaries applied an

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average of 27 kg of additional fertiliser per hectare beyond the subsidised quantity. This suggests that subsidies can ease financial constraints and encourage farmers to invest more of their own resources.

In the Senegal River Valley, however, purchases of unsubsidised fertiliser declined by more than 70%, as subsidised inputs largely replaced commercial purchases.

These contrasting experiences demonstrate that the same programme can stimulate private investment in one area while displacing it in another. The study also found no statistically significant improvements in rice, groundnut or millet yields, reinforcing the need to assess programme effectiveness beyond the quantities of inputs distributed.

Complementary Investments Make the Difference

Agricultural support delivers greater value when accompanied by investments in infrastructure, processing and market development.

ISRA-BAME's modelling suggests that subsidy benefits can extend to other sectors, with estimated production increases of 0.48% in food processing and 0.46% in livestock.

However, without adequate storage, processing facilities and market access, increased agricultural production can depress farmgate prices, reducing farmers' returns. Complementary investments are therefore essential for translating production gains into sustainable incomes, stronger value chains and wider economic benefits.

Are Subsidies Reaching the Intended Beneficiaries?

Programme effectiveness also depends on whether support reaches those it is designed to help.

ISRA-BAME's distributional analysis found that only 6.48% of subsidy benefits reached severely food-insecure households, while relatively better-off households received a larger share.

Regional disparities were also evident, with Saint-Louis accounting for 19% of allocations, compared with less than 1% each for Dakar and Ziguinchor.

These findings highlight the importance of aligning support mechanisms with programme objectives. An intervention designed to increase agricultural production may require different targeting approaches from one primarily intended to reduce poverty or food insecurity. Clear objectives, transparent eligibility criteria and accountability are therefore essential.

From Subsidies to Catalytic Investment

Senegal's experience points towards a more strategic approach to agricultural support. This includes transparent targeting criteria, appropriate limits on subsidised quantities and delivery mechanisms such as vouchers that encourage rather than replace commercial input purchases.

Predictable policies, reliable implementation and complementary investments are equally important for strengthening private-sector confidence and encouraging sustained investment.

Public spending decisions must also account for wider economic trade-offs. ISRA-BAME's modelling suggests that financing subsidies can place pressure on other economic activities, including construction, public works and commerce.

Ultimately, successful agricultural support should be measured not simply by the amount spent or inputs distributed, but by the productivity gains, additional investment and lasting economic opportunities it generates.

For Senegal and other African countries, the challenge is to design support systems that address farmers' immediate needs while strengthening markets, agricultural value chains and the foundations for sustainable agricultural transformation.

Dr. Omar Diouf is a researcher at the Macroeconomic Analysis Bureau of the Senegalese Institute for Agricultural Research (ISRA-BAME), where his work focuses on macroeconomic modeling of agricultural policies and impact assessment of input subsidy programs. He is co-author of several ISRA-BAME policy briefs on agricultural subsidies in Senegal.

INTERVIEW WITH FWASA SINGOGO

Fwasa Singogo is a Research Associate at the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI) and an economist with several years of research experience in development economics, agricultural policy analysis, and economic theory.

In this interview, Fwasa shares insights from IAPRI's research on Zambia's beef value chain, presented during the 2026 ANAPRI Brownbag Seminar Series as part of the PPVC initiative. Below are highlights from his responses. You can watch the full interview on the ANAPRI YouTube Channel.

What is holding Zambia back from reaching its full potential as a beef exporter?

Fwasa: The constraint is not cattle. It is market-access architecture. The sector has approximately 5 million heads of cattle supporting an estimated ZMW 21 billion (about US$1 billion) industry, yet only 2-3 percent of output is exported. Animal health is a considerable constraint. Between 2020 and 2023, the country recorded 563 outbreaks of its ten most significant cattle diseases, exposing roughly a million animals. Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) alone restricts access to high-value markets. This is compounded by weak traceability system, substandard abattoirs and cold chains, high transport costs, and the fact that cattle are still largely traded on an "eye test" basis. These restrict the realization of better quality and associated higher returns.

Nearly 80 per cent of the country's cattle are owned by smallholder farmers. What does this mean for how we think about transforming the beef sector?

Smallholders hold approximately 80 percent of the herd, and they supply an estimated 69 percent of marketed animals implying transformation must be inclusive, or it will not happen. The national supply curve is, in effect, the smallholder productivity curve. Therefore, targeting becomes integral, particularly as smallholders hold cattle as assets and will only invest in genetics, animal health and improved feeding when economic incentives are right. A transparent price premium would make possible returns visible. Reform must therefore prioritize farmer sensitization, particularly regarding traceability and compartment requirements. Furthermore, aggregation, feedlot linkages and certified compartments linked to out-grower networks that practice transparent weight-based pricing should be promoted.

Beyond increasing beef production, what needs to change for Zambia to become more competitive in regional markets?

While producing more beef is integral to sustaining market participation, our modelling illustrates the limitation of pushing more volumes into a market with a rigid price ceiling. This could significantly drive carcass and retail prices down, eroding farmgate incomes and discouraging the very investment the strategy depends on. Production growth must therefore be matched by availability of competitive markets and by quality differentiation. This would require addressing the disease burden, partly by implementing and adhering to biosecure compartments and sanitary phyto-sanitary (SPS) systems that provide access to premium markets. This should be accompanied by a carcass-based grading and reference-pricing system so that there are recognized returns for quality or the added investment to improve the quality of beef produced. Last but not least a tailored financing facility for abattoirs, cold chains and processing should be prioritized. This is to unlock improved quality and also facilitate increased production.

What does Zambia's informal beef trade with neighbouring countries,

particularly the DRC, reveal about regional market opportunities?

The presence of trade, even though informal, illustrates demand and the feasibility of a proven market. Zambia exported roughly 2,497 tons of beef in 2024, however, it is estimated that only about a quarter of it was traded formally. The bulk of which is estimated to have gone to the DRC. DRC retail prices are estimated to range between two to four times Zambian farmgate prices at the least. However, traders currently absorb most of that gap as a risk premium while navigating porous borders and weak trade regulations. Converting demand into greater value for the country and farmers requires addressing the disease burden; adhering to and harmonising SPS protocols; improving traceability; improving cold chain and handling capacity at Kasumbalesa (Zambia-DRC border town); and lowering duties on infrastructure equipment. AfCFTA accession helps. This is because Zambian cattle are fully raised and the beef is processed here, so it qualifies for preferential entry compared to countries like Brazil. However, while trading under AfCFTA lowers the cost of formality, it does not guarantee market access. Formal premium market access primarily rests on verifiable animal health status.

What is the most important lesson from Zambia's beef value chain analysis, and what action should stakeholders take?

That will be the importance of sequence before scale. The US$1 billion export ambition implies roughly 255,000 tons a year, about twice the size of the domestic market, while business as usual model forecasts estimate exports to cumulatively reach approximately 27,000 tons by 2035. Front-loading capacity before realizing the conditions for returns creates sunk costs and price cliffs. Therefore, addressing the disease burden is imperative. FMD compartments should be funded or addressed first. This should be coupled with grading and quality differentiation. After that, an infrastructure fund to improve processing facilities should follow.

STRENGTHENING AFRICA–CHINA AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships create opportunities for institutions to contribute, learn and benefit. By combining complementary expertise, evidence, technologies and institutional networks, partnerships can generate shared value, strengthen research capacity and accelerate agrifood transformation. For ANAPRI, meaningful cooperation must be built on mutual respect, shared priorities and two-way knowledge exchange.

In September 2026, ANAPRI Secretariat Executive Director, Dr Antony Chapoto, visited Beijing, China, to participate in the World AgriFood Innovation Conference, held from 17 to 19 September. The visit provided an opportunity to engage Chinese researchers, institutions and other stakeholders on strengthening agricultural knowledge, innovation and policy cooperation between Africa and China.

Dr Chapoto participated in discussions on AI for Agriculture, the World Agrifood Scientists Forum, and the China–Africa Agricultural Science and Technology Industrial Cooperation Parallel Session. His engagements highlighted a win-win approach through which African institutions can learn from China's agricultural research, technology and development experience, while Chinese partners gain access to African evidence, local knowledge, policy expertise and nationally embedded research networks.

A major outcome was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on 18 September 2026 between ANAPRI and the Academy of Global Food Economics and Policy at China Agricultural University. The MOU established a framework for joint research, policy learning, researcher exchanges, capacity development, AI and digital agriculture, and technology assessment and adaptation.

The partnership is an important step towards building an Africa–China agricultural knowledge bridge that delivers value to both sides through shared learning, stronger institutions and locally relevant solutions.

More mutually beneficial partnerships are already taking shape and will be featured at our Annual Stakeholders Conference. ANAPRI welcomes governments, researchers, development partners, private-sector organisations and other institutions interested in working with our network to explore opportunities for collaboration.

Kindly contact us at info@anapri.net.

CENTRE SPOTLIGHT

TEGEMEO INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT, EGERTON UNIVERSITY

Agricultural trade barriers in Kenya Validation Workshop

Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and Development is a leading agricultural policy research and development institute of Egerton University. The Institute generates credible, policy-oriented evidence to inform agricultural and rural development policies, programmes and investments in Kenya and the wider region.

Guided by a commitment to high-quality research, evidence-based policymaking, capacity strengthening and stakeholder engagement, Tegemeo works with policymakers, researchers, development partners, the private sector and other stakeholders to address critical challenges and opportunities facing agriculture and food systems.

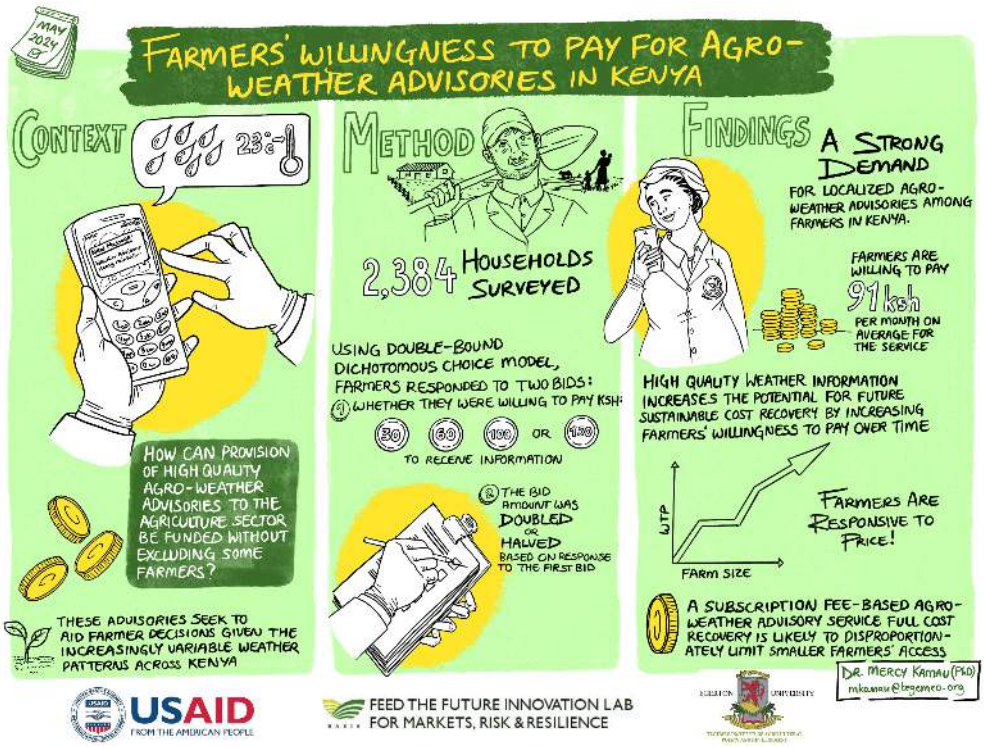
Vision: *A People Forever Free from Hunger and Poverty*
Mission: *To conduct proactive policy research and advocacy that enhance food security, create wealth and sustain the environment.*

Core Research Areas

Agricultural and food systems policy; agricultural productivity and competitiveness; food and nutrition security; agricultural markets and value chains; rural livelihoods and poverty; climate change and resilience; land and natural resource management; agricultural finance and investment; technology and innovation; gender and youth in agriculture; and agricultural sector performance and policy analysis.
Tegemeo also conducts household and market surveys, generating valuable data on agricultural production, markets, livelihoods and rural economies. The Institute promotes research uptake through policy dialogues, stakeholder consultations, dissemination forums, training and capacity building.

Key Research Projects and Initiatives

Tegemeo has implemented major re-



Farmers' willingness to pay for Agro-weather advisories in Kenya

search and development initiatives in partnership with national and international institutions, including:

Tegemeo Agricultural Policy Research and Analysis (TAPRA): A USAID-supported programme implemented with Michigan State University, generating evidence on agricultural productivity, rural incomes, food security, markets, climate change and gender.

- **Tegemeo Rural Household Panel Surveys:** Five survey waves conducted in **1997, 2000, 2004, 2007 and 2010**, providing a valuable longitudinal evidence base on rural livelihoods, poverty and agricultural policy impacts.
- **FTF ALL-IN:** Research on agro-weather, market information and its contribution to farmer decision-making, productivity and resilience.

tions.

Current Initiatives

Tegemeo's current portfolio includes projects with **3ie/ FCDO, IWMI, Kenya Dairy Board, WFP, CGIAR-CIAT, FAO, AATF, NAVCDP and AFA,** covering evidence use in coffee and fertilizer reforms, climate resilience, dairy cooperatives, value chains, nutrition-sensitive markets, school feeding, agricultural development and wheat production.

Achievements

Evidence That Informs Policy. Research That Drives Change.

Tegemeo has established itself as a trusted centre for agricultural policy research, data generation and policy dialogue. Its evidence has contributed to reforms in key subsectors including maize, dairy, coffee, sugar, tea and pyrethrum, as well as major national frameworks such as Kenya Vision 2030, the Kenya Rural Development Strategy, the Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture and other agricultural sector reforms.

End-of-project outreach and dissemination workshop on "Impact of Agro-weather Advisories on Productivity and Resilience in Farming Communities in Kenya"

- **3ie Seed Adoption and Food Security Project:** Research with Wageningen University, Makerere University and Pearl Seed Limited on cost-effective approaches to promoting improved maize and bean seed varieties.
- **Climate-Smart Agriculture and Rural Development:** Research, measurement, learning and evaluation support to programmes including KCSAP, NARIGP and NAVCDP.
- **Fertilizer and Soil Health Policy Research:** Research contributing to fertilizer and soil health policy initiatives, including the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan and 2024 Seeds and Plant Varieties Regula-

The Institute has developed substantial expertise in monitoring, learning and evaluation, impact assessment, household and market surveys, data analysis and policy research. Through policy dialogues, conferences, workshops and dissemination forums, Tegemeo connects evidence with policymakers and other stakeholders.

Meeting discussion on future market regulation and nutrition sensitive investments amongst Kisumu County Leadership, EAC, FAO and Tegemeo Institute, on transformation of Kibuye Market into ultra-modern market.

Future Plans

Tegemeo seeks to strengthen its position as a leading agricultural policy research and development institution in Africa by expanding demand-driven research, strengthening agricultural data systems, harnessing digital technologies, and generating evidence on climate resilience and sustainable food systems.

"Shaping sustainable futures: The influence of policies, programs and economic factors in Kenya's agriculture and well-being". Stakeholder Conference held on October 29-30, 2024.

The Institute will deepen partnerships across Africa and globally, enhance research dissemination and evidence uptake, and address emerging priorities including food systems transformation, agricultural competitiveness, women and youth in agriculture, and regional agricultural development.

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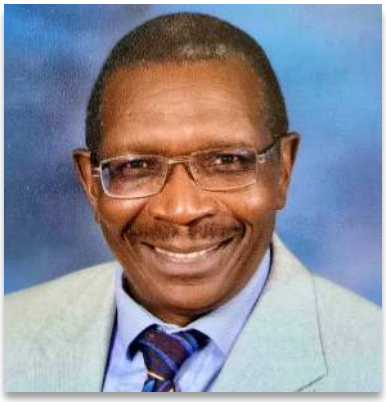

Professor Gideon Obare,
Executive Director - TEGEMEO

Join the 13th ANAPRI Stakeholders Conference in Addis Ababa

Africa's agrifood sector holds significant opportunities for expanding regional trade, developing competitive value chains, creating employment, attracting investment and accelerating innovation. Realising these opportunities will require stronger connections between evidence, policy, markets and implementation.

The 13th ANAPRI Stakeholders Conference will provide a platform for advancing these connections from 26 to 29 October 2026 at the Hyatt Regency in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Hosted by the Policy Studies Institute of Ethiopia, the Conference will convene policymakers, researchers, private-sector leaders, development partners, farmer organisations, regional institutions, youth leaders and other stakeholders from across Africa and beyond. Under the theme, *"Building Competitive Agrifood Economies: Policy, Trade, and Industrialization Pathways for Africa,"* participants will explore practical approaches to strengthening the continent's agrifood competitiveness, resilience and transformation. The programme will feature pre-conference workshops, high-level plenaries and thematic sessions covering agricultural trade and regional markets, agrifood industrialisation, oilseeds and feed systems, soil health and input systems, artificial intelligence, policy delivery, investment and strategic partnerships.

Participants will gain fresh policy insights, learn from experiences across countries and sectors, exchange practical ideas and connect with others working to advance Africa's agrifood systems. The Conference will also provide opportunities to contribute perspectives that can inform policy, investment and institutional pathways for Africa's agricultural transformation.
Participation is available both in person and virtually. Digital certificates will be issued to participants who meet the applicable attendance requirements.

Register for the 13th ANAPRI Stakeholders Conference
For enquiries, contact info@anapri.net.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

- July: ANAPRI highlighted pathways for advancing soil health investments at the 9th Africa Agriculture Science Week and FARA General Assembly. Discover more in our July Newsletter.
- August: AFIDA and ANAPRI advanced fertiliser subsidy reforms through their policy dialogue. The ANAPRI Secretariat conducted a strategic mission to PiLAF, Nigeria. Revisit our August Newsletter.
- September: ANAPRI and partners explored agricultural value chain transformation through the 2026 Brownbag Seminar Series and spotlighted ISSER's new policy research partnership. Explore our September Newsletter.

Our Centres

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Africa Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes