INITIAL FINDINGS OF RUR
SELECTED DISTRICTS OF T

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A study carried in 1995, among 197 randomly se
Province indicate a high incidence of and variabilit
Botlokwa are totally food insecure, while that of Se
food secure. Based on calculations of the minimum
sample, 58%,17% and 25% are classified as food i
drought and lack of income as the causal factors of
production, employment seeking and asset accumu
households. Intensifying staple food production, wo
enhancing participatory agricultural and rural devel
possible options and strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION: THE PROBL SETTING

Amartya Sen(1981) in his famous book " *Poverty Famine: An Essay on Entitlement Deprivation*"established the important concept entitlement to the Food Security equation: Supply Access. He noted that: *"Starvation is the character of some people not having enough food to eat. It is the characteristic of there not being enough food to*

In an economist's framework food supply is a neces condition for food security and access to it is sufficient condition. "Food Security exists when where a population is sure of access to safe nutritious food. On the national level, a country have a stable supply of food that is available t households and individuals. There must be a guara of physical and economic access to adequate food fo household members at all times, without undue ris losing such access." (Grukan, 1995). Although the a definition may appear very simple, complexity when measuring, analysing and monitoring the ca relationships and consequences of food insecurity.

Over the past three decades global food production grown faster than population, resulting in 18% more capita food production than 30 years ago. In terms food availability about 2700 calories per person per are available compared to 2300 calories three dec ago. Although these figures reflect a ge improvement in food world food availability, (1996) estimates indicate that more than 800 mi people in developing countries face chronic u nutrition and 200 million under the age of five s from acute or chronic protein and energy deficiencie these problems are not combatted, the numbe undernourished people may still be as high as million and over 300 million of them will be in Saharan Africa by year 2010. The same projections classify 88 countries of the world as Income Food Deficit Countries (LIFDC), and of t 42 are in Sub Saharan Africa.

South Africa being as a food surplus producing cou is not classified as an LIFDC. It is generally acce that South Africa produces sufficient food for the population yet a large proportion of the total popula face acute problems of malnutrition, hunger and u

Province. Every member country of the FAO (S
Africa included) is expected to present a position p
on Food Security at the forthcoming World
Summit of 13-17 November, 1996 in Rome, Italy
South Africa, where very little knowledge
smallholder agriculture and food security is availabl
prepare a comprehensive document on Food Securit
the Summit becomes a daunting task and with it con
challenge for researchers.

A study to investigate the incidences and pattern
rural household food insecurity was launched in 19
selected districts of the Northern Province. This p
highlights the initial and preliminary findings of
study to stimulate further discussion on the sub
guide the on-going research and contribute to the
of knowledge in HFS which would be relevant to
rural areas of South Africa.

1.1 Provincial profile

The Northern Province is the poorest province in S
Africa with a GDP per capita of R1266 (DBSA, 19
The Province has a population of about 5.12 mi
(growing at 3.9% per year), with a total area of 119
sq km (14% arable and 54.2% grazing land). It has
lowest degree of urbanization (12.1%) and is h
predominantly a rural region where agriculture play
important role.

This mostly semi-arid Province, is characterized
problems of drought, animal disease, lack of water
human and livestock, depleted underground water
human and livestock. Recurring drought has adver
reduced both crop and livestock production in the re
(Northern Province, White Paper on Agriculture, 19
Most rural households are subjected to seasonal
shortages. Employment opportunities in the rural a
are very limited or non existent. These features m
the Province particularly vulnerable to food insecurit

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Several authors (White Paper on Agriculture, 1
Staatz et. al., 1990, Eicher and Staatz, 1986)
defined Food Security as the ability of all household
a nation to acquire a calorie-adequate diet at all tim
Food Security has two interrelated components:
Availability and Food Access. Food availability may
ensured through production, storage or trade. Acces
food is achieved through production, purchases in
market from income earned or food transfers. It is c
that food security for the broad population is not alw
directly related to a country's ability to produce f
Singer (1996) provided the following six factors for
declining food security situation in Afr
marginalization of Africa in economic and hu
development indicators; the impact of war and conf
deterioration terms of trade and debt burdens
developing countries; globalization of markets leadin
the shift from food to cash crop production; and
resulting dependency on imported food and Afri
increasing population (Sartorius von Bach, 1996).

While food security research may focus on a nationa
regional level, household level research perspec
places major emphasis on analysing household data
the performance of institutions in assuring housel
access to food. Analysis of micro level data provide

representativeness and their potentials in agricultur production. Structured questionnaires were used to g cross sectional data on: household characteristi demography, resource availability and use, foo production, availability, consumption, income an expenditure on food, marketing, access to institution support (credit, extension and research), househo coping strategies and perceptions on food insecurit Secondary data from previous studies are used to f gaps.

Analytical Techniques: Simple descriptive statistics a presented for the household characteristics on most the above variables. Calculations of the values household food purchases, farm and none farm incon and value of available liquid assets for the purchase food as used by households are used as proxies measure the level of food security. Joel et. al. (198 identify the poverty approach and the monetary pover line as possible techniques to define basic consumpti needs in a specific society.

The first defines individuals as poor if they fall below poverty line set according to well defined standard SALDRU (1993) in its study of the Northern provin estimated R750/month/HH as the poverty line. Th latter considers the value of the basic basket of goo and services and defines anyone consuming (or earni income) less than a certain amount as being below t poverty line. The third approach which is used in th study following Phillips et. al, (1992) in defining simplified food security equation as:

$$FPDhh \leq ILAhh$$

where

FPDhh = Value of food production deficit of household (defined as the value of t food purchase requirements or t

Table 1: Food Security Indicators in Selected Distr

Value (Rands)	Nebo	
FPDhh	1614	
ILAhh	760	

Source: Computed from the survey data, 1995

Table 2: Status of food security by household type

Value label	Small families (
Food insecure(1)	64
Vulnerable(2)	27
Food secure(3)	9
Total	100% (10

Source: Survey Data, 1995

Table 3: Status of Household Food Security by dist

District	Insecure %H
Nebo	62
Seshego	62
Botlokwa	53
Giyani	45
Venda	31

Table 4: Average Maize and Groundnuts as Repo

District	Maize in Kg
Nebo	282
Botlokwa	27
Giyani	862
Seshego	473
Venda	1010

Table 5: Households' Perception on Food Shortag

Experience Food Shortages yes (HH)
For see Food Shortages (yes %HH) HH)
Credit Users (% HH)
Market Access(% HH)
Access to Lnad: Farm land avialbale per HH in Hecta

Source: Survey Data, 1995.

Seshego are vulnerable to food insecurity since t available incomes hardly cover their requirements

Attempts to calculate the value of subsistence f production and purchased food at individual level/ adult equivalent show that 58% of the people in sample are food insecure while 17% are vulnerable 25% are food secure. Those classified as insec allocate for purchasing and/or consume own product valued less than R342 per year per adult equivalen meet the minimum daily calory requirement (2205) the vulnerable group allocates between R342 and R and secured households are those with more than R4 Although these figures show a very rough indicatior HFS, it has been very difficult to get data on quanti of food consumed, purchased, sold and income.

Tables 2 and 3 reveal the status of HFS by family t (small families are those HHs with less than 5 pers and large families are those with greater than 5 pers in the household) and by districts, respectively. production data for the major staple, maize and the c crop,groudnuts as reported by the respondents are gi in Table 4. Almost 90% of the HHs produce ma except in Nebo where 11 of the Hhs do not produce maize at all.

4.1 Households' perception on food security

Table 5 depicts that more than two-thirds of the H responded have had an experience or incidence of f shortages. Respomdents attribute the causes of f shortages to drought (50%), insufficient income (34 and to other factors. 47% of the respondents also sta that the summer months when stocks from previ harvests are depleted to be the most severe time of f shortages followed by the winter months (25%). those hhs producing food, 24% claimed that their sto do not last more than six moths, 19% between 6 and months and only 29% have food in their stores last for more than a year. Other responses on credit u market and access to farm land reflect the differen between HHs in the districts (Table 5).

a) enhance domestic food production/supply;

b) improve food access to the poor a vulnerable groups and

c) accelerate agricultural and rural developme programs.

An obvious strategy is to stimulate local food producti especially staple crops (drought tolerant, i.e. maize a sorghum in the province, particularly for househol who do not have the means to purchase food).Improvi and developing efficient water management systen developing farming systems and technologies adapted sustainable production for the province,strengtheni adaptive agricultural research and extension are possit options National and Provincial Agricultural Poli makers have to explore.

Further research to identify vulnerable and food insecu groups in the rural areas is crucial to design a target direct food security intervention (food subsidi programs to improve food access to the poor a vulnerable groups. Accelerating agricultural and ru development calls for provision of appropriate supp services to improve the productivity existing farmi systems, promoting schemes targeted at increasing farm and off-farm employment, infrastructure improved services and marketing, improving the la tenure and security of farmers (particularly the poor a women farmers). Finally it is critical that effecti participation of farmers in the agricultural and ru development process is maintained. The ultim positive effect of these measures will undoubtly impro the coping strategies to deal with the risk of fo insecurity. Subsequent comprehensive HFS studies v deal with detailed analysis of the factors responsible HFS and their interrelationships and to eventua develop a model to measure and monitor the process.

NOTES

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