

# AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF WOMEN MAIZE FARMERS IN SWAZILAND



Dlamini L .N and Makhura M .N



## INTRODUCTION

- Women farmers have been and continue to be the backbone of subsistence farming (Barnes, 1979).
- Outmigration of Swazi men from rural to urban areas seeking work in towns and mines has stressed the increased responsibility of women in agriculture and their economic hardships.
- Therefore, commercialisation is one strategy being promoted by the Swazi government as a means to promote poverty alleviation and wealth creation (MOA, 2016).
- It translates into high productivity, greater specialization and subsequently higher incomes for farmers.
- As such, development programmes have been developed to assist farmers (Masuku, 2015). However, the problem with these programs has been that:
  - Difficulty in penetrating both local and international markets.

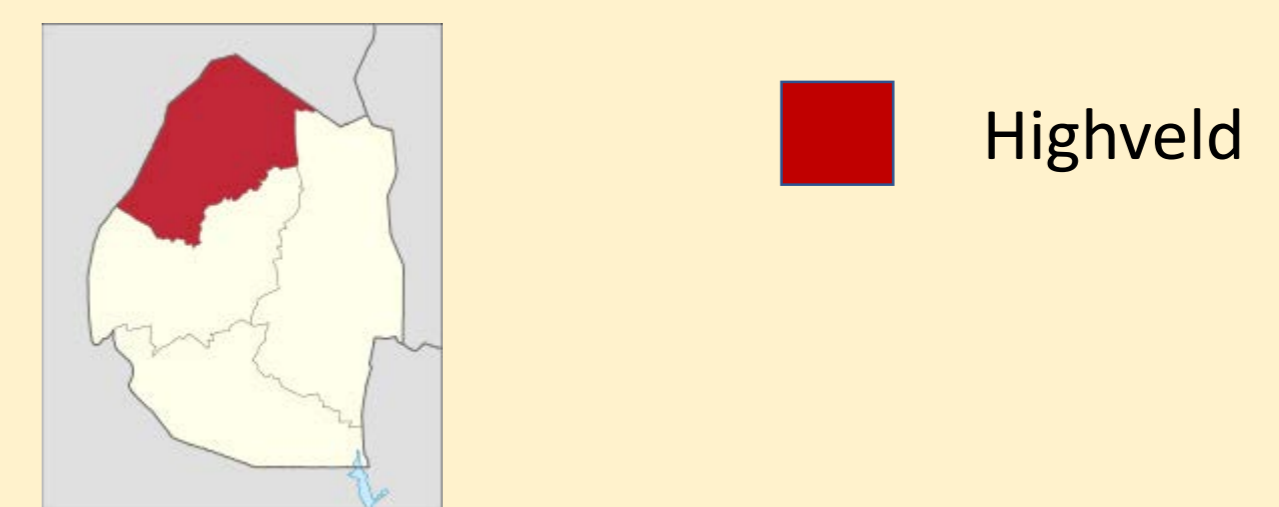
## OBJECTIVE

To identify the factors that influence commercialization of women maize farmers in the highveld region of Swaziland.

## METHODOLOGY

- A qualitative research design was used to gain in-depth understanding of market participation.
- A semi-structured questionnaire was used to capture farmers' information on socio-economic factors, asset ownership, institutional factors, market factors, production factors and geographical information.
- The highveld district was selected for the study because of the rapid maize production in the area. This presents opportunities for:
  - ✓ High productivity
  - ✓ Greater specialization
  - ✓ High incomes

Fig 1: Map of the study area



## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Several factors influence the probability of participation in the maize market among farmers in the highveld region of Swaziland. Figure 2 presents the factors that influence commercialization in the pooled sample as well as the male and female sub-samples.



- Household characteristics such as the educational level as well as the assets owned and the likes, influence market engagement in the pooled sample. These affect assessment, adoption of new technologies and marketing decisions .
- Compared to men, women engaged in farmers' groups to attain price and marketing information.
- Women also rely on financial facilities to be able to penetrate the market whilst men have wealth-generating assets such as cattle.

## CONCLUSION

- Improving market engagement by women requires in-depth understanding of household characteristics which are significant in crafting recommendation domain for:
  - ✓ Marketing approaches to be promoted for maize and other small grains.
- Establishment of formal farmers' groups as well as introduce and intensify extension worker training which includes marketing. Helps disseminate information prior to selling.
- Government should ensure that the land policy considers the vulnerable (women) in society.