

Special EVENT

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POLICY RESPONSES TO FOOD PRICE VOLATILITY

WEBINAR CHAT TRANSCRIPT

FEBRUARY 2, 2015

PRESENTERS

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WEBINAR CHAT TRANSCRIPT

USAID Agrilinks: Good morning to everyone who is joining us in the room already! We plan to start in about 30 minutes. Please let us know where you're joining us from?

Richard Tinsley: Dick Tinsley, Colorado State University.

USAID Agrilinks: We are going to extend this webinar session by an extra 30 minutes as well, in order for additional networking and discussion about the seminar.

Richard Tinsley: Anyway, can you play some background music so we know if the audio is working?

Moderator: Morning, Dr. Tinsley! I am not sure we have background music--but Jerod can sing you a song.

Hans Muzoora: Hans Muzoora with Agridev Solutions joining in from Boston, MA.

USAID Agrilinks: Great to have you with us, Hans.

Richard Tinsley: That is ok, I have attended some webinars that have some background music playing during the prelim and it does a good job of avoiding all the those comments about not hearing, etc. Perhaps in the future.

Moderator: So what brings people to today's webinar?

Richard Tinsley: Jerod, I have got those blogs you requested drafted and should have them to you tomorrow.

Moderator: Excellent!!

KDAD AV Tech: Good to see you online again, Richard. Yes, I usually play some music for all the reasons you mentioned but I've been stretched a little thin lately and forgot my iPod this morning! Yes, definitely going forward...

Kathy Alison: Kathy Alison, Africa Lead II.

USAID Agrilinks: Once again, thanks to all for joining. We will get started in 10-15 minutes.

Dilip Bhandari: Dilip Bhandari, Heifer International @Little Rock.

Steven Haggblade: Steve Haggblade, Michigan State University.

Dilip Bhandari: I'm using Google Chrome and it's working very well.

Richard Meyer: Steve: Hello, Dick.

George Kegode: George Kegode, Independent Consultant, Maryville, MO. Using Google Chrome and it seems to be working fine.

Richard Bailey: Hart Bailey, Mississippi State University.

USAID Agrilinks: Chrome will sometimes cause issues when there are a lot of participants. It can work more slowly.

Manongi Masham: Manongi Masham, CTA Brussels.

USAID Agrilinks: Please remember to use this chat box when asking questions for the presenters. Remind us when you ask a question where you work and where you're joining from.

Moderator: So what brings people to today's webinar?

Moderator: Any interesting projects involving policy/food prices?

Richard Meyer: Ohio State in Columbus.

Moderator: Feel free to share project links and organizational websites!

Gary Burniske: Gary Burniske - with the Center for Global Food Security at Purdue University - Good morning!

Moderator: Morning, Gary! What brings you here today? Tell us about your current work!

Richard Tinsley: My website is www.smallholderagriculture.com the only thing it contains is a comparison of consumer prices between the USA (/Colorado) and about 15 other countries.

Shweta Chopra: Shweta Chopra with Iowa State University.

Kathy Alison: The Africa Lead II project's website is: <http://www.africaleadftf.org/>

Richard Tinsley: One of my concerns is the tendency of some countries to place ceiling prices on basic commodities, how essential that might be to keep consumer prices low, but disincentive for food security.

Kathy Alison: And our Facebook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/Champions4Change>

Gary Burniske: Purdue's Center for Global Food Security - we are currently calling for applications for Graduate Student Research grants, and candidates for the Summer Institute. Info on our website: www.purdue.edu/discoverypark/food

USAID Agrilinks: We plan to get started in about 5-10 more minutes.

Silke Pietzsch: Silke Pietzsch, Action Against Hunger | ACF USA

John Russell: John Russell, Principal at EcoFoodSystems in Bend, Oregon, U.S.

Moderator: Thanks for sharing Gary! Hopefully there are some students/academics joining this morning and we can share the message with a broader network.

Sinead Mowlds: Sinead Mowlds Brookings Institution.

Moderator: Morning John and Silke!

Silke Pietzsch: Sorry, but just checking, there is no sound yet, right?

Kathy Alison: FEED THE FUTURE: BUILDING CAPACITY FOR AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION (AFRICLEAD II) supports the advancement of agricultural transformation in Africa as proposed by the African Union Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP). Simultaneously, Africa Lead II contributes to the Feed the Future (FTF) goals of reduced hunger and poverty by building the capacity of Champions—defined as men and women leaders in agriculture—to develop, lead, and manage the policies, structures and processes needed for the transformation process.

Marie Antoinette Patalagsa: Marie Antoinette Patalagsa at AVRDC- The World Vegetable Center (<http://avrdc.org>).

Sophia Murphy: Sophia Murphy, Institute for Agriculture and Trade policy and PhD student at University of British Columbia.

Duncan Boughton: Good morning from a sunny winter day at Michigan State University.

Sophia Murphy: Website is www.iatp.org

Julie Collins: Julie Collins, IFPRI--International Food Policy Research Institute.

Elon Gilbert: Hi Kathy! Cold am here in Montana.

Rose Kadende-Kaiser: Season of Health www.season-of-health.com founder, work in community health and development-We provide training to integrate nutrition and lifestyle coaching principles in program design and implementation.

Kathy Alison: Hi Elon, it is rainy in DC. Nice to see your name.

Nicole Mason: Nicole Mason from Michigan State University. Good morning!

Will Sander: Will Sander, AAAS S&T Policy Fellow hosted at US EPA.

USAID Agrilinks: We are about to get started.

John Gorlorwulu: John Gorlorwulu from USAID Ghana.

Patterson Brown: Patterson Brown, Trade Advisor, USAID/BFS.

Madeleine Smith: Madeleine Smith, JSI, Research and Training – SPRING.

Mary Norris: I have my mic turned all the way up but it is still hard to hear.

Hugh Kelly: Permezone - pilot program to fund permaculture centers in different regions to provide long-term training and support to local farmers in the use of permaculture principles.

John Nicholson: Greetings everyone. I am the Knowledge Management manager with USAID's global nutrition project, SPRING www.spring-nutrition.org

William Akiwumi: William Akiwumi, Program Analyst, USAID/AFR/SD/EGEA.

Gary Burniske: My mic is also turned all the way up and it is hard to hear.

Moderator: Hugh, where are your current projects located?

USAID Agrilinks: If you are having any audio issues, please private chat our KDAD AV Tech.

Gary Burniske: Great - volume has improved. Thanks!

Richard Meyer: Sorry no audio.

Hugh Kelly: We're just getting started - planning to start with Permaculture Research Inst - Kenya.

Moderator: Excellent! Wishing you the best of luck.

Hugh Kelly: Thanks!!

Oumar Moussa S. Diallo: Oumar Moussa S Diallo, M&E Specialist Senegal/Dakar.

USAID Agrilinks: Thanks for joining Oumar. Please remember to type questions here for our presenters.

Moderator: Any rice or wheat researchers out there? How do you feel about price fluctuations?

Camilla Gomes da Silva: Camilla Gomes from Federal University in Brazil.

Moderator: Morning Camilla! What is your area of research?

Don Humpal: Don Humpal, Senior Agriculturist, DAI.

Camilla Gomes da Silva: Hi! My area of research is instruments for protection of biodiversity as an economic resource of exploration for sustainable development.

Moderator: Wow, feel free to share any project links or resources with other attendees.

David Soroko: David Soroko, Crown Agents/Weidemann, Senior Advisor.

Don Humpal: At the world level, how do you evaluate the interaction between sugar-ethanol and maize- ethanol and respective sugar and maize commodity prices?

Marlene Stearns: Good morning, Women's Food Leadership Initiative - building food policy and business case studies in dev-ing world focused on rise of women led agribusinesses.

Michael Doherty: Good morning -- Mike Doherty, Senior Economist for Illinois Farm Bureau.

Moderator: Feel free to provide input with a gender perspective Marlene!

David Soroko: I can share a recent presentation to the Agricultural Core Course entitled "Global Trends in Grain and Food Retail Markets". Send requests to dsoroko@crowagents.com...or request from John Thomas, USAID.

USAID Agrilinks: Wonderful! Thanks for sharing, David.

Rose Kadende-Kaiser: Hi Marlene- Which countries do you work in?

USAID Agrilinks: What do you view as some of Dr. Pinstrip-Andersen's most interesting points so far?

USAID Agrilinks: The 2007-2008 food price crisis certainly provided an interesting opportunity for study of this issue.

Marlene Stearns: Hi Rose, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru, Senegal, Ghana, Ethiopia, Uganda, Malawi, South Africa, and considering expanding to 3 Asian countries next year.

Moderator: Feel free to type your questions here as you listen to the presentation, we ask that you state your name, country and organization when asking!

Richard Tinsley: Does this mean the farmers get the short end of the policy.

Christine Negra: The export bans were widely criticized. Would be interesting to hear the speaker's assessment of this tactic.

Silke Pietzsch: I guess Per is right on the skewed targeting, and political threat to governments from the demonstrations. The application of good safety net and social protection policies still needs some larger improvements, food prices volatility or not. Lots more work to do to ensure reliable transfers for the most vulnerable!

Richard Tinsley: How much of the trade and marketing goes around the government across those leaky borders?

Rose Kadende-Kaiser: Thanks Marlene-can we chat afterwards-rkadende@yahoo.com

USAID Agrilinks: Good point, Silke!

Rose Kadende-Kaiser: Marlene- my email: rkadende@yahoo.com

Moderator: Rose, you can also private chat with Marlene by hovering over her name in the participant list, right clicking and selecting private.

USAID Agrilinks: As a reminder, we will also be extending the chat an extra 30 mins. to facilitate further conversation and networking.

Richard Tinsley: How much of the limited action a result of limited financial resources for the government which is basically stalled for lack of tax base?

Rose Kadende-Kaiser: Great- thanks.

Silke Pietzsch: Richard, there is some interesting analysis on informal cross border trade from 2005 between Nigeria- Niger- Mali-Burkina. It's a WFP report. Very interesting!

Sinead Mowlds: Will these presentations be available online post-event?

Moderator: Yes Sinead, they will be posted to the Agrilinks event page about a week following the event.

Sinead Mowlds: Thank you!

Marlene Stearns: Rose - thanks for your contact. I'll email you.

Silke Pietzsch: Protect price signals - this is a common problem: even if early warning systems alert to problems, the community of practice and governments tend to be very slow to react to these alerts and take action.

USAID Agrilinks: The presentation will also be available for download at the end of the seminar.

USAID Agrilinks: In the "File downloads" box.

David Soroko: The main holders and managers of global cereals stocks are multinationals at this point. Also, what is the impact on global cereals prices of commodity market financialization...i.e. the entrance of speculators and their taking positions in cereals markets as pure speculation?

Silke Pietzsch: Exporter and speculation! It should be allowed to invest and speculate on food stocks, its unethical for the vast majority of population of this planet!

Nina Schlossman: Nina Schlossman, Global Food & Nutrition & Tufts University, Washington DC.

Christine Negra: What disincentives do exporting countries have NOT to implement an export ban in response to domestic pressures?

USAID Agrilinks: Thanks, David. Where are you working and where are you joining from?

Mary Norris: Mary Norris--EG Office Director in Zimbabwe: I would think that export bans were the most common response in developing countries due to lack of other instruments or capacity to implement superior policies. If donors don't have an alternative and willingness to provide some support, probably can't criticize even the controls, if prolonged, are damaging as the speaker notes. The idea of strengthening international agreements is a good one (tho don't know how effective it will be in time of crisis).

Silke Pietzsch: I agree with Mary, it's hard to blame a country for closing export trying to protect its citizens' food needs! And certainly in times of crisis most agreements fall through, as everybody fights for themselves... is anybody aware of a comprehensive review of functioning and experience with Government Strategic Grain reserves?

Sophia Murphy: IATP is working with Oxfam to collect grain reserve studies and news - there is not really a good comprehensive review. See <http://www.foodreserves.org>

David Soroko: I work in DC for Crown Agents/Weidemann Associates.

USAID Agrilinks: Remember to ask questions for our presenters in this box!

John Russell: For Per: Are there any ways the international community can facilitate smallholder farmer organizations in LDCs to build the kind of political clout they have in countries like S. Africa and Brazil?

Moderator: Hi John, what does the acronym LDCS stand for?

John Russell: Least Developed Countries.

Alemayehu Dekeba Bekele: Farmer organizations in LDCs are just an instruments for political agenda.

Alemayehu Dekeba Bekele: Farmers are suffering from being part of these co-ops.

USAID Agrilinks: John, where do you work and from where are you joining?

Alemayehu Dekeba Bekele: In Ethiopian case, the most positive case are only coffee cooperatives and financial cooperatives. This cooperatives are working because of some peculiar reasons.

John Russell: I'm Principal at Eco Food Systems, in Bend, Oregon.

AV Monitor: We hope you're enjoying our presentation. If you're sitting at USAID and having issues accessing the webinar, images or audio, kindly private chat "KDAD AV Tech" or "AV Monitor." Thanks!

Alemayehu Dekeba Bekele: Farmers organizations need to be reformed to meet the market's needs.

Robert Navin: I am an independent food/trade advisor to USAID. Question for the presenters: West Africa has plans to coordinate a food reserve to stabilize prices. How is this going and what should be done?

Richard Tinsley: Can you find a farmer organization with a major market share of the commodities unless they hold a monopoly control?

Richard Tinsley: Typically I only see farmer organization receiving loan repayments and that is about all.

Michael Doherty: Richard -- don't understand your question.

Alemayehu Dekeba Bekele: @Richard, coffee cooperatives in Ethiopia have a major market share in the coffee sector.

Richard Tinsley: You mean 8 kg per member!!

Silke Pietzsch: That is right Alemayehu, because you have a national stock and trading center. It's pretty well organised in ET,. Thanks to a visionary individual! This should be government policies!

David Soroko 3: With countries like Saudi Arabia abandoning wheat production and building one year strategic reserves, an China, India, S. Korea and other countries buying LDC land to produce food for export to their consumers, how do we rationalize LDC government's not intervening in their food markets?

Richard Tinsley: Visit my website www.smallholderagriculture.com and then about half way down the issue page for concern about deceptive reporting of cooperatives with Ethiopia coffee the featured example.

Elsa Aburto: It is clear that the winners of fertilizer subsidy programs are fertilizer companies that captured public spending.

Silke Pietzsch: David, what do we do with Saudi Arabia not producing themselves anymore, but now land-grabbing in Africa? Taking away land from small holder farmers and local food security?

@OverseasImpact: If anyone knows of a sustainable agriculture project that could benefit from financing (\$500,000 to \$400 million), please contact us: www.overseasimpact.com or @OverseasImpact on Twitter.

Alemayehu Dekeba Bekele: Richard I need more information on that.

Richard Tinsley: I tried to copy my reference but could not so i can only ask you to visit the website for all the details, but basically the cooperative system is just too administratively cumbersome that generates too much overhead costs to be competitive.

Don Humpal: For Danielle: What evidence is there that evidence-based analysis moves or doesn't move food policy decisions, e.g. export ban experience in Eastern and Southern Africa?

Richard Tinsley: I think you need to factor in what I refer to as the overall financially suppressed economy, resulting in very limited tax base, and thus a civil service that is basically financially stalled, the result is the agriculture officers are allowed and encouraged to undertake consulting opportunities for large farmers leaving the small farmers to fend for themselves. I would venture that 90% or more of smallholder agriculture completely by-passes the government and all its efforts.

Richard Tinsley: Again I can only refer to the website and top of the issue pages.

Grace Lerner: More information on the paper by Danielle and colleagues can be found here: <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/conceptualizing-drivers-policy-change-agriculture-nutrition-and-food-security>

Christine Negra: Thanks! Interesting to hear that WTO may be the best venue for minimizing use of export bans.

George Kegode: Richard, having worked as an extension agent in Kenya I can attest to the power of the large farmer at the expense of the smaller farmer, with some of those larger farmers being the politicians who make the laws. Thirty years later, the situation has gotten worse and the NGOs have now moved in to 'fend' for the peasant farmer.

Don Humpal: WTO is a very, very slow responder. The time to decisions is years, sometimes a decade or more before action can be taken.

Richard Tinsley: Unfortunately NGOs are only temporary interludes in the process and eventually lose funding and have to go home.

Hans Muzoora: An interesting article can be found at <http://thisisafrica.me/nigerian-farmers-evicted-global-alliance/>

George Kegode: That is true. And to add to that, the more developed countries are sneaking in and acquiring land to produce food for their citizens, again at the expense of the powerless smallholders (whose lands are being 'appropriated' by governments for these 'lucrative' deals).

USAID Agrilinks: Note that there are additional resources and the slides for download to the left of your screen.

AV Monitor: We have about ten more minutes in Q&A so please keep those questions coming!

David Soroko: I would comment that international cereals markets are becoming less and less competitive with the top four or five traders controlling 90% of cross border trade. Sure, there are new entrants such as Olam, but their approach to strategic alliances and vertical integration will still result in oligopolistic market tendencies.

Rose Kadende-Kaiser: Interesting article Hans Muzoora- Thanks for sharing.

Robert Navin: Question: Malawi recently lost much of its strategic grain stock due to poor stock management. In response, some donors have again helped with food aid, etc. Is this what donors should be doing in terms of creating the correct incentives?

Victor Pinga: Question for Per: How can we even begin to think about changing or influencing the food systems in LMICs when we have ourselves a food system here in the US that is difficult to change and to work in the interest of public health and nutrition. The private sector incentives are just very distant from the public's interest, in health and nutrition. (Victor Pinga from the SPRING Project)

Moderator: Hi Victor, can you define the acronym: LMICs

USAID Agrilinks: Low and middle income countries.

Micheal Tesfasilassie: Question; can the WTO set some rules for minimum amount of food to be exported/imported by the countries to protect the international market prices?

Victor Pinga: Low and lower middle income countries, aka 3rd world or LDCs.

USAID Agrilinks: Micheal, from where are you joining and who do you work with?

David Soroko: USAID invested more than \$4.9 billion in 240 agribusiness and agriculture value chain projects between 1998-2012. 184 of those projects supported some form of rural collection action (producer organizations, farmer group business, cooperatives, etc.) yet this massive investment and long term perspective has yielded no formalized lessons learned, recognizing that the firms and NGOs that implemented those projects have their own lessons learned. Why has support to agrarian collective action made so little progress?

Rose Kadende-Kaiser: And also-can WTO set rules that protect countries at risk of food insecurities in the short term from exporting food commodities?

USAID Agrilinks: Thanks to all for asking your questions! If we didn't get to your question in this session, we will follow up with the presenters and then post them on the event page.

Victor Pinga: Thanks. Looking forward to it.

USAID Agrilinks: As a reminder, we will have the seminar room open for an extra 30 minutes to facilitate additional discussion and networking. Please stick around!

Cornelia Flora: Next time, look for sociologists.

Moderator: That would add a great perspective to the discussion, are you a sociologist Cornelia?

USAID Agrilinks: We have opened our end polls! Please take a minute to fill them out.

USAID Agrilinks: We welcome your feedback.

Kathy Alison: Mic is still on.

USAID Agrilinks: Remember to stick around and chat with your colleagues.

Silke Pietzsch: Mic.

Micheal Tesfasilassie: Yes, I am on.

Assoumane Maiga: Thank you for the outstanding ideas.

Moderator: I see we still have around 45 people online.

Victor Pinga: Waiting for the download link.

Moderator: Feel free to network a bit and exchange information and ideas regarding today's topic.

Robert Navin: Will the slides be made available?

Moderator: Hey Victor, give me a couple of minutes.

Moderator: I will change to the download screen in 2 minutes, we have given enough time for poll questions.

Assoumane Maiga: Yeah having the slides would be great.

Moderator: I have just changed the screen.

Moderator: On the left you can see "File downloads" pod.

Moderator: You can click to download the slides.

Assoumane Maiga: Thanks.

Victor Pinga: Thanks much. "See" you again soon.

Moderator: As a reminder, we will have the seminar room open for an extra 30 minutes to facilitate additional discussion and networking.

Moderator: There is also the option to hover over a participants name and right click and select private chat.

Michael Doherty: And it was mentioned that we can download this chat stream?

Moderator: Hi Michael, this chat stream will be formatted and uploaded as a pdf in one week's time to our events page.

USAID Agrilinks: What are your key takeaways from this discussion?

Michael Doherty: Great! thanks for that info! -- Excellent webinar, btw.

USAID Agrilinks: Thanks, Michael!

USAID Agrilinks: Thank you for joining.

Michael Doherty: Per Pinstруп-Andersen research project -- v interesting and excellent resource.

USAID Agrilinks: Agreed. He had some very informative graphs and policy response points.