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An assessment into the effects of climate change on smallholder farmers of Chivi district in Masvingo, Zimbabwe

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This study was discussed about the findings of the research that was carried out in Chivi district of Masvingo, Zimbabwe among predominantly smallholder farmers. The main aim of the research was to assess climate change impacts and adaptation policies used. These farmers are vulnerable to the effects of climate change due to marginal location, low levels of technology and lack of essential farming know-how and technology. The researcher used information from interviews of agricultural extension officers, desk based research, literature review and questionnaire surveys administered to smallholder farmers. The majority of the farmers indicated that prolonged heat wave, hot and dry weather conditions causes hunger and starvation. Some specific impacts of these conditions include crop damage, soil erosion, poor plant germination, pests, lower incomes and reduced yields leading to food insecurity. Some farmers professed ignorance about climate change and how it will affect future farming. Other farmers pointed out high frequency of floods, drought, precipitation with hailstorms, drying up of rivers, dams and wells, changes in timing and pattern of seasons as evidence of climate change. Suggested climate change strategies include: strengthening and improving indigenous land and water management practices, use of decision support tools such as seasonal weather forecast data, growing resistant small grains and conservation farming. It is therefore concluded that there is need to educate farmers about climate change and design adaptation strategies. There is also needing to avail agricultural research results relevant to the smallholder farmers and train them on how to use the results to make informed on-farm investment decisions.

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