Evidence-Based Policies: From Politics to Reality

By
Antony Chapoto, PhD

Presentation to Parliamentarians
Lusaka, 18th April 2016
Presentation Outline

- What is evidence-based policy-making?
- Why is it important?
- What is role our as Parliament?
- Conclusion
Where is Zambia’s Agriculture?
If government could increase its spending on rural development and poverty reduction programs, what are the top three priorities you would vote for?

- Input Subsidies (FISP)
- Education
- Water and sanitation

- Health Care
- Buy more maize through FRA
- Roads & Brides
If government could increase its spending on rural development and poverty reduction, what do you think are the top three most important priorities?

1. Health Care
2. Roads & Brides
3. Education
4. Water and sanitation
5. Input Subsidies FISP

Buy more maize through FRA

Not in top ten
Evidence-Based Policy Making in Zambia

- Development outcomes depend on the quality of policies adopted.
- Quality of policies depends on the evidence on what works and what doesn’t.
Food Price Dilemma

A never ending Government struggle!!!

Farmers lobby for higher maize prices + lower fertilizer prices

Lower consumer prices, usually culminating into consumer subsidies

FRA usually above market price at harvest time

Source: pixgood.com
“Evidence-based policy helps people make well-informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation. (Davies, P.T., 1999)
How To Deal With Agriculture Issues?

THE RIGHT WAY

Evidence Based
- Discussions
- Policies

1. Diagnosis
2. Evidence
3. Prescription
4. Monitor
5. Re-evaluation
The Challenge?
Solution
Why Evidence-Based Policy Making?

**Effectiveness** - ensure we do more good than harm

**Service orientation** - meet citizen’s needs/expectations

**Democracy** - enhance the democratic process

**Efficiency** - use scarce public resources to maximum effect

**Accountability** - transparency on what is done and why

**Trust** - help ensure trust in government and public services
Agricultural policies and programs in Zambia are often inadequately informed by research-based evidence due to:

- information gaps,
- political expediency
- lack of transparency
- ineffective and outdated solutions
- fear of change
- rent seeking behaviour by a privileged few
- culture and conventional wisdom
- habit and tradition
How Do We Change The Status Quo?
How Can We Change The Status Quo?

Policy makers
Politicians
Technical Staff

Researchers
How Can We Change The Status Quo?

- DEMAND INFORMATION
- USE EVIDENCE
- DEMAND THAT YOUR ADVISERS ARE FACTUAL & PROFESSIONAL
Enhancing Evidence-Based Policy

- Continuous dialogue
Enhancing Evidence-Based Policy

- Communication of research findings effectively to our constituents
Enhancing Evidence-Based Policy

- We are always ready to provide you with evidence about the sector
- With speed
- Can monitor progress
What Do We Want To See?

Evidence-Based Policies

- Diversified Agricultural Sector
- Private sector led agricultural growth
- Hunger Free Zambia
- High agricultural GDP growth
- Zero Post harvest Losses
- Breadbasket of the Region
- Lower rural poverty rates
- Open Borders
- Zero malnutrition
What Is The Role Of Evidence-Based Policy Making?

“Evidence-based policy helps people make well-informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation. (Davies, P.T., 1999)
Conclusion

- How can smallholder farmers be better served?
  - Is FRA & FISP the answer to farmers?
  - What policies are required to stimulate agricultural transformation?
  - How can we get there?
Thank You

Zambia’s Agriculture