



# IMPACTS OF MAIZE AND BEANS MARKETING FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN LESOTHO: THE CASE OF CA AND CONVENTIONAL FARMERS



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## INTRODUCTION

Maize and Beans are the most grown crops in Lesotho as they are important sources of starch and protein respectively. Agricultural marketing in Lesotho is evolving especially due to the government's National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP 11) of commercialization of agriculture which promotes increased productivity and production levels. Most farmers produce for subsistence purposes due to their small landholdings. However, there is emphasis on commercial production which requires marketing skills to be successful. NSDP 11 priorities commercialisation of the agriculture sector and has influenced government focus and efforts to establish and resuscitate market centres in the North and Southern Districts of the country. Unfortunately, these are largely idle because farmers fail to produce consistently the quantities that the market requires and most produce is rain fed and seasonal.

Majority of the farming households in Lesotho practice subsistence farming, while those practicing commercial farming often face challenges related to market access. Market access is hampered by poor road infrastructure, lack of storage and processing facilities, high transportation costs, inadequate market information, and limited bargaining power. Most smallholder farmers, including maize and bean producers in Lesotho, face different challenges that hinder them from getting the opportunities offered by various marketing channels (Habiyaemye *et al.*, 2023). Market channel selection refers to the process by which several actors decide to sell in different marketing outlets to dispose of their (agricultural) products/ produce. This decision process is influenced by the features, quality expectations, efficiency, and costs linked to the farmer's final decision. Marketing channels that this study investigates include Cooperatives, Collectors, Wholesalers, Retailers, Street vendors and Consumers.

## OBJECTIVES

- To investigate and compare market channels that CA adopters and non-adopters producing maize and beans use to market their produce.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Survey Design

The study utilized data collected during the baseline survey for the Agricultural Productivity Programme for Southern Africa (APPSA) Lesotho in 2022. The survey covered seven districts in Lesotho that included; Quthing, Mophale's Hoek, Mafeteng, Leribe and Maseru. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 807 respondents in sampled villages in the seven districts. The structure questionnaire was the most suitable data collection tool to conduct farmer interviews. Farmers in developing countries in most cases are either uneducated or not highly educated therefore to ensure they can respond to the survey questions with understanding the data collection tools were translated to the local language. The study used multiple sampling approaches that included purposive sampling, snow ball sampling and simple random sampling. Purposive sampling was used to identify seven districts that were included in this study, this was informed by prior knowledge of Conservation Agriculture activities in the country

### Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected from the producers, a combination of descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages) and an econometric model (multivariate probit model) were used (Dessie *et al.*, 2018). According to Arinloye *et al.* (2014); A); Shewaye (2016); Tarekegn *et al.*, (2017); Honja *et al.*, (2017) and Temesgen *et al.*, (2017), producers are more likely to choose two or more market outlets simultaneously, assuming that the selection of different marketing outlets as well as their simultaneous use depends on the producer's willingness to maximize their profits and is conditional on socioeconomic, institutional, production, and market-related factors.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Proportion of Farmers Choosing Marketing Channels

Four hundred and thirty-eight (438) farmers from the sample of 807 sold their produce, while the other 349 farmers produced solely for consumption. An individual farmer can use two or more available marketing channels; therefore, the number of marketing channel choices will not equal the total number of farmers who sell their produce. The most used marketing channel as chosen by farmers was consumers (414), followed by street vendors (100), then retailers (41), collectors (36), wholesalers (11), and finally cooperatives (6).

Table 1: Maize and beans marketing by CA adopters

Marketing channels	Non adopters	Partial adopters	Full adopters	Total
Cooperatives	2 (33.33%)	2 (33.33%)	2 (33.33%)	6 (100%)
Collectors	18 (50%)	13 (36.11)	5 (13.89%)	36 (100%)
Wholesalers	7 (63.64)	2 (18.18%)	2 (18.18%)	11 (100%)
Retailers	22 (53.66%)	9 (21.95%)	10 (24.39%)	41 (100%)
Street vendors	38 (38%)	33 (33%)	29 (29%)	100 (100%)
Consumers	197 (47.58%)	139 (33.57%)	78 (18.84%)	414 (100%)

The study defined non-adopters of CA as farmers who did not use any CA practices. Partial CA adopters were farmers who had adopted one or more practices under one or two CA principles but not all three, whereas full CA adopters were farmers that had adopted any one or more CA practices that were covered by all three CA principles. As depicted in Table 1 above, forty-eight percent (47.58%) of the consumers marketing outlet was chosen by non-adopters of CA, 33.57% of the selections were chosen by partial CA adopters, and 18.84% of this marketing outlet was chosen by full CA adopters

## Conclusions

The study revealed that roughly half of the farmers sampled from the seven districts of Lesotho produced not just for subsistence but to sell their produce. The majority of the farmers used the Consumers marketing channel, followed by Street vendors, then Retailers, Collectors, fewer Wholesalers, and Cooperatives were the least used marketing channel. Since CA adoption is still low in Lesotho, the majority of the choices for each marketing channel were from non-adopters of CA except for Cooperatives where non-adopters, partial adopters, and full CA adopters equally used that marketing channel. Gender, household income, vehicle ownership and contractual agreement, all had an influence on marketing channel choice by maize and bean farmers in Lesotho

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