

# Government tractor services provision: where to for indigent farmers?

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## Introduction: What have been the outcomes of the programme after five years?

The agricultural mechanisation programme was introduced in 2010/2011 by the national Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) as a mandate to the nine Provinces of the country. The provinces were then to *mechanise* (provide land preparation services using modern machinery and production inputs) on behalf of farmers. The KwaZulu Natal's corresponding Departmental "Mechanisation Policy" outlined that: target beneficiaries were the *indigent, vulnerable households* and *less privileged communities*; the intended outcomes were poverty alleviation and promotion of food security while creating vibrant agricultural communities. After five years of existence the programme is being phased-out and whether the outcomes have been realised remains a question of interest.

## Data sources

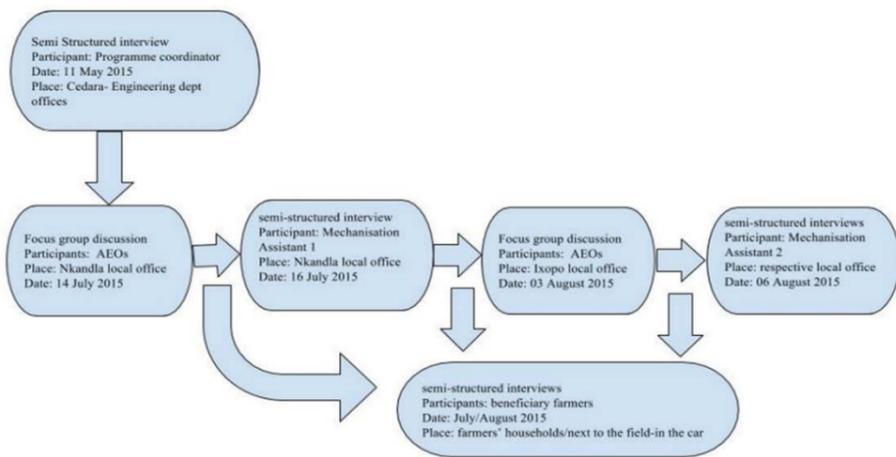


Figure 1: flow diagram for data collection

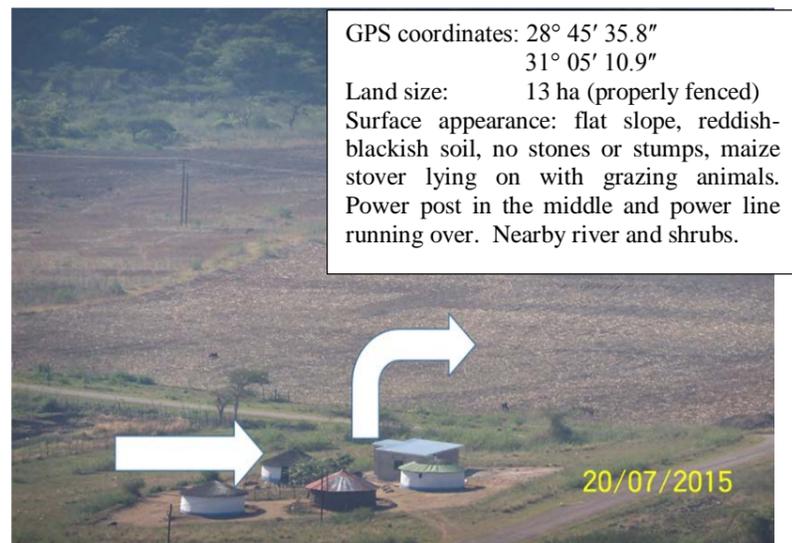
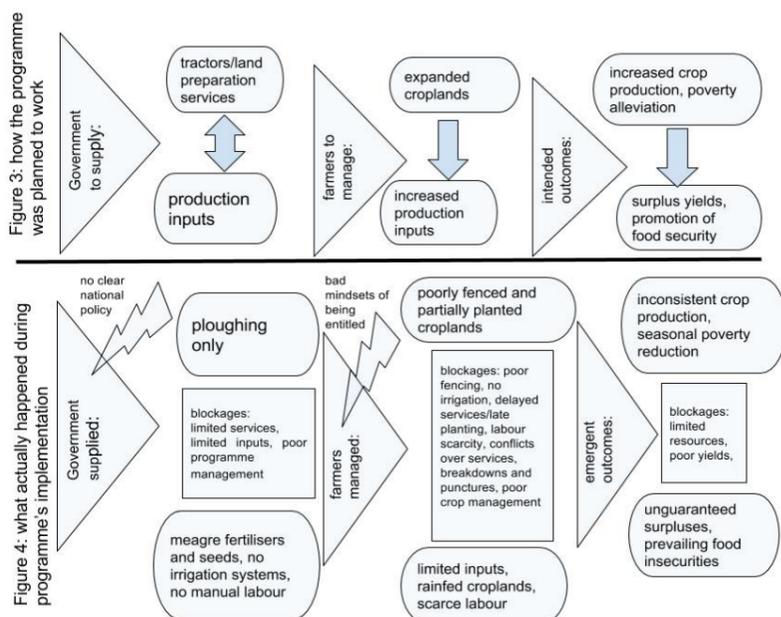


Figure 2: household farmers' interviews were followed by field observation walks

## Findings

Programme services were helpful though jeopardised by being ill-timed in terms of planting season, limited to ploughing only (as opposed to planted land for increased food production) and had frequent mechanical breakdowns.



## Recommendations

Establishment of minor projects as preliminaries of mechanised farming systems; and multiple programmes of various power options such as improved hand-tools; advanced animal draft technology; small, medium to large tractor models.

## Implications for extension

Classification of farmers through a locally based database and categorise them according to the levels of advancement then decide which ones to target for what power option.

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