

Future Agricultures International Conference

Seasonality Revisited

Institute of Development Studies
University of Sussex, Brighton, UK

8th–10th July 2009

Call for papers

The Future Agricultures Consortium together with the Centre for Social Protection is convening a 3–day conference on **Seasonality**, to be held on Wednesday 8th to Friday 10th July 2009 at IDS Sussex. Funded by the UK Department for International Development (DfID), the Future Agricultures Consortium operates as an international partnership of research institutions, working together to encourage critical debate and policy dialogue on the challenges of establishing and sustaining pro-poor agricultural growth in Africa, through stakeholder-led policy dialogues on future scenarios for agriculture, informed by in-depth field research.

Conference Focus

Pioneering work on seasonality in tropical agriculture was undertaken during the 1970s and 1980s, which identified the cluster of negative factors that converge to make the lives of poor people worse during the pre-harvest months every year. Since then, a number of things have changed – structural adjustment programmes, HIV and AIDS, climate change, the global food and financial crises – which all have seasonal dimensions or implications. However, these seasonal dimensions are under-appreciated, and policy responses in the areas of agricultural investment and social protection programmes rarely pay due attention to seasonality. The Future Agricultures Consortium aims to revive academic and policy interest in seasonality, partly by hosting this conference.

The conference will bring together 50–60 international participants, to include academics and practitioners, as well as policymakers from both governmental and international bodies. The conference will be global in scope but with a strong focus on Africa. The event aims to think through lessons from the past, examine current research, review good practice and consider policy options for the future.

We invite proposals for papers for the conference, focused on the following areas:

Seasonal Inter-linkages: We invite papers to explore the multiple, complex and temporal effects of seasonality – seasonal linkages between labour and asset markets, health and schooling, food production and climate change; or linkages of multiple dimensions like these, with others such as communications and isolation, housing, prices, debt, hunger, pregnancy and exhaustion. This list is not meant to limit, only to illustrate. We encourage papers that integrate perspectives from multiple disciplines and perspectives.

Seasonal Blind-spots: This theme encourages thinking ‘outside the box’ around seasonality. For instance, how do topics as diverse as conflict, crop and stock theft, marital violence, conception, and human ecology enlighten our understanding of seasonality? Also under this theme, we invite reflective pieces that review why earlier efforts to bring seasonality to centre-stage have not succeeded.

Seasonal Trends: We invite papers that analyse trends in seasonality and its impacts, as well as adaptive behaviour or ‘seasonal coping strategies’. Trends to consider include the relationship between climate and environmental changes and seasonality; and trends in patterns of migration, urbanisation and labour use that are complicated by seasonality.

Methodologies: How to analyse seasonality and its impacts, using various methods such as modelling, quantitative surveys, qualitative and participatory methods; critiquing ‘seasonal blindness’ in agricultural research.

Policies and Projects: From structural adjustment to Africa’s Green Revolution and the high food prices crisis, policymakers and project designers seem to be unaware of seasonality, with potentially drastic consequences. How to build awareness of seasonality into policy processes and programming?

Social Protection Responses: How do and how can social protection interventions take account of seasonality? We welcome reflections and empirical studies investigating issues of programme design, targeting and delivery of social protection.

Of particular interest are research findings that draw on case studies, examining questions such as: How does seasonality affect small farmers? Are there contrasts within and between countries? Is seasonality gendered? How is seasonality changing? Are there any examples of innovative responses to seasonality?

The papers should fall broadly within the main themes above. Abstracts of proposed papers (500 words) are due by **April 1st, 2009**. Applicants will be notified by April 30th. Complete papers are due by **May 31st 2009**. Papers will be posted on the conference website in advance of the conference. We anticipate that a number of the papers will be collated into a volume, either a book, IDS bulletin or a journal special issue.

Limited funding for travel and accommodation is available. Preference for funding requests will be given to presenters with no funding from their organisations.

Conference organisers: Robert Chambers, Stephen Devereux, Richard Longhurst, Rachel Sabates-Wheeler.

Abstracts and papers should be sent to:

Stephen Devereux: s.devereux@ids.ac.uk; and
Rachel Sabates-Wheeler r.sabates-wheeler@ids.ac.uk.

All other enquiries should be addressed to

Deborah Shenton: seasonality@ids.ac.uk; Tel: 01273 915-760.

More information regarding the organisers is available on these websites:

Future Agricultures Consortium: www.future-agricultures.org
Centre for Social Protection: www.ids.ac.uk/go/centreforsocialprotection
Institute of Development Studies: www.ids.ac.uk