

Contemporary African Agricultural Transformation

Presentation at the 2016 AAEA
Meetings
Boston, MA

Outline

- Context
- What is new?
- Moving forward

Context: 20th century

- Classical structural transformation
- Neo-classical structural transformation dependent on agricultural transformation
- Supported by failure of Prebisch-Singer ISI, success of Green Revolution
- Indicators:
 - Agricultural transformation = staple crop yields
 - Structural transformation = ag share GDP/jobs

GR but not available for everyone

- But some countries particularly African and South Asian agricultural economies did not join in the Green Revolutions
- Differences in 20th century: institutions, markets, policies, land pressure, climate etc.

What isn't new?

- Necessity of productive and efficient agricultural and food systems in structural transformation and economic growth
- Necessity of linked agricultural / food system growth and non-agricultural growth

What is new?

- Current feasibility of 20th century GR led ag transformation: lower staple prices, longer supply chains, deindustrialization, agglomeration vs. congestion, etc.
- Constraints: water, GHG emissions, deforestation, desertification, biodiversity, nutrition, income inequality, global competition, etc.
- Opportunities: high-value commodities, new technologies, multi-product agriculture, energy crops, solar/wind farming, carbon sequestration, geo-politics, urban offsets, urban pollution remediation, etc.
- Knowledge: ag/food system, environmental/ecological, nutritional/health, policy/institutional, technological, etc.
- post 2015 global context: SDGs, Paris Agreement (COP21), World Health Association Targets, etc.

What is new?

- Therefore the form of the agricultural transformation is new
- Therefore the policy implications are new

Normative

- What are we asking agricultural and structural transformation to accomplish?
 - Country-owned agendas
 - Regional/continental agendas
 - Post-2015 global agendas

Illustrative Visions of Successful Transformation



Positive

- (Normative) what are we asking agricultural and structural transformation to accomplish?
- Is what we are asking feasible?
- What are policy instruments and best practices for getting there?

Approach

- Take a more holistic view of agricultural and structural transformation
- Requires a broader set of indicators of agricultural and structural transformation
- Examine effect of policy on moving this set (or a subset) of indicators forward—but recognizing that few policies work in isolation.

- Inputs Policy
- Dietary Diversity
- Agricultural Transformation and Nutrition

Knowledge

- Ag & food systems
- Environmental/ecological

Post-2015 global processes