Rural Women Subsistence Farmers, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Agricultural Research in South Africa

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ABSTRACT The study used secondary sources to make a critical analysis of the issue of rural women farmers, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and agricultural research for sustainable livelihood in South Africa. Examples were drawn from the following provinces: Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and North-West. The study argues that a critical understanding of the way these factors impact on agricultural policy and research for a sustainable rural livelihood should be an important challenge for policymakers, researchers, development agencies, and other stakeholders. Women using their IKS played a great role in agriculture. These factors tend to be marginalized in agricultural research. They have limited access to and control over agricultural resources. Therefore, a critical understanding of IKS and gender in agricultural research should be taken seriously by researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders. These factors influence the interpretation and use of IKS in agriculture.