Institute for Futures Research

















Client need

The services of the Institute for Futures Research at Stellenbosch Business School were retained to explore the futures of work in the agricultural sector of South Africa. This was a comprehensive project, spanning 10 months in duration and involving a number of stakeholders. These included government, industry, and interest groups. To formulate a robust and multi-faceted futures perspective, the IFR employed a selection of futures methodologies to analyse and crystallise this problem, with the purpose of constructing alternative scenarios of agricultural employment for South Africa toward 2035.

The two pivotal uncertainties, are:

- The composition of the market: The extent to which there is a balance between mega, small and subsistence farmers and other enterprises within the agri sector.
- **Appropriate skills:** The extent to which potential and current participants possess relevant knowledge and proven abilities. It also includes extent to which knowledge transfer is appropriate and successful.





Brief overview of the scenarios





Learning agility Appropriate expertise

Agri for some

Knowledge is optimised by, and for the benefit of, large players only



Agri for all

A fair-access system with spontaneous momentum, propelling knowledge-sharing and opportunities across the entire chain

Market dominated by a few, large players High barriers to entry

MARKET COMPOSITION

MARKET COMPOSITION

Wide range of players of different sizes Relatively low barriers to entry

Market dominated by big players, that are turning to technology to replace people, mostly because people are not appropriately skilled

Agri by others



8-8

The market composition is strongly regulated, but the lack of appropriately skilled people contribute to failures.

Agri by numbers

Limited, inappropriate skills Low levels of learning agility

Agriculture skills for the future could be categorised as follows:

- Soft skills: collaboration/teamwork, communication, customer service, business principles, and sales.
- Systems thinking (design thinking, critical thinking, exponential thinking, process, project management, problem solving).
- Technology integration (low tech and high tech, engineering and analysis).
- Data management (storage, analysis, collection, security).
- Basic natural sciences (soil, biology, plant, animal).







Brief overview of the scenarios





- Five mini-scenarios add richness to the report, and may help users to 'see' potential futures:
- How aquaculture became a sector leader in South African agriculture
- Urban farmers taking the lead
- Land philosophy how efficient usage finally trumped the political agenda
- How agri became cool
- Filling the missing middle





