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**Topic: Agrarian transformation and small enterprises in the food system:
Opportunities in South Africa**

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Abstract

South Africa has recently seen a resurgence of food gardens and small scale agriculture. This is an important marker of where and how we should approach agrarian transformation and food system development in South Africa. These gardens and small-scale farms are the diametric opposite of large scale agriculture, and this itself reflects the exclusion that has been effective in land, agrarian and food systems since colonialism. The most recent General Household Survey (StatsSA 2019) indicated that up to 2.2 million households have recently constructed food gardens at their homes in order to avert food insecurity. It is these farmers who hold the key to food system transformation, and our policy and developmental approaches need to meet them half-way if we want to transform our food system. The Agricultural Census of 2011 (StatsSA 2011) and the recent GHS indicate that slightly less than 20% of the population is active in agriculture. We can safely say that there are about 2.5 million “agricultural” households in South Africa, but the more recent statistics on the resurgence of food gardens shows that this is fluid and that people move in and out of agriculture in response to poverty. However, this sizable group of farmers has become more differentiated enabling specific recommendations on their development. This article develops an action research programme to develop emergent small farmers in South Africa.