

**Developing understanding  
of the different factors  
influencing farmers' PH  
decision-making:  
An enquiry tool**

**'Small-scale farmer utilisation of  
diatomaceous earths during storage'**



# **Background issues:**

- **Research has identified many technologies which were anticipated would benefit small-scale farmers, but:**
- **Too often specific technologies, proven to ‘work’ by researchers, have not been widely adopted by farmers.**
- **Research products have failed to increase productivity or food security for many small-scale farmers in sub-Saharan Africa**



# **What are some of the problems?**

- **Poor implementation strategies or capacity (irrespective of quality of extension policy).**
- **Lack of understanding and/or commitment to donor induced poverty agenda.**
- **Interface with farmers, or farmers' groups, often skewed (contact/progressive farmers, technology skews)**
- **Lack of knowledge about farmer diversity and the factors influencing different farmers' (or HHs') decision-making**



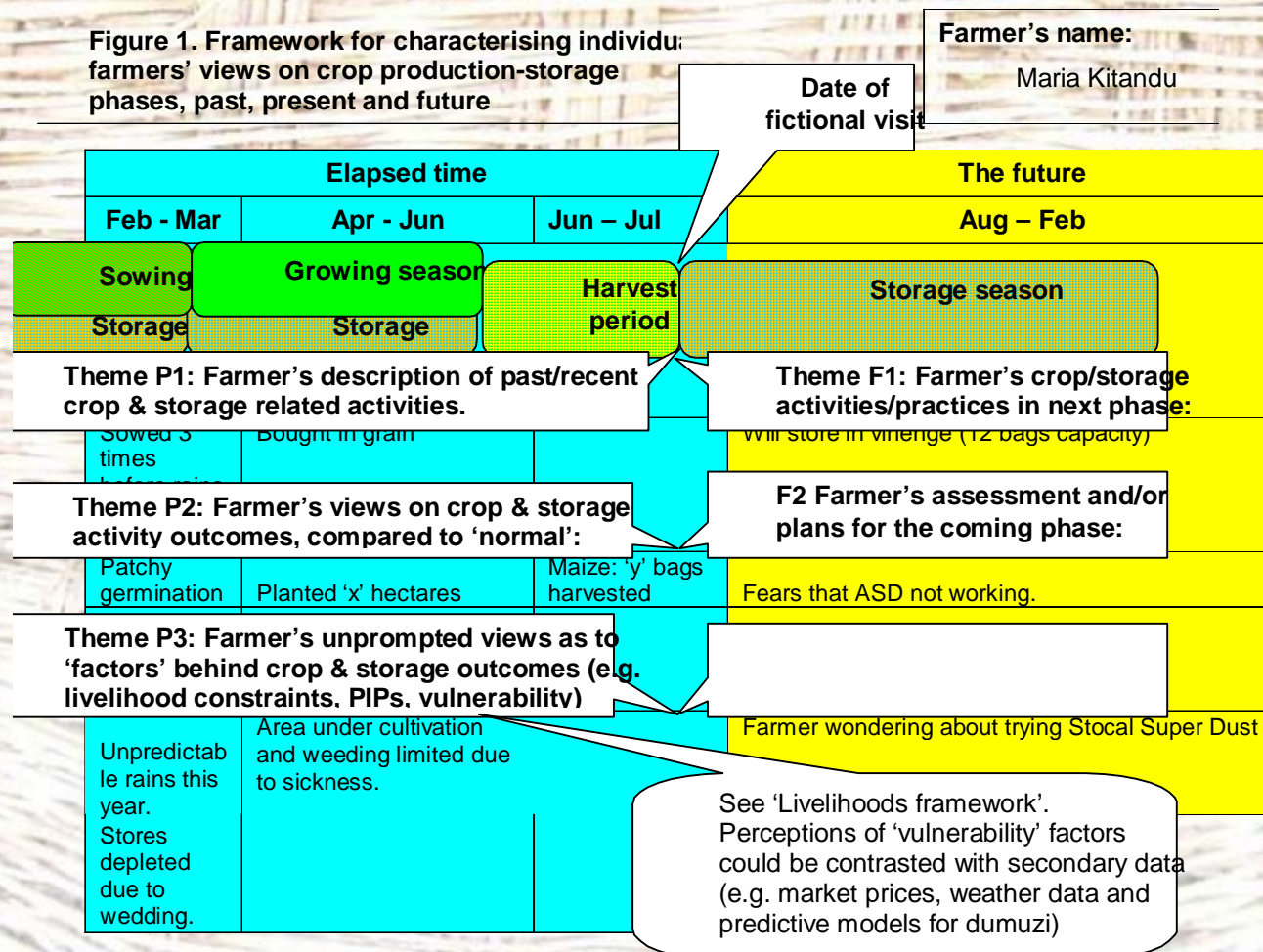
# Challenges to developing understanding of farmer decision-making:

- Need to develop a **methodology** (or overall ‘strategy’) to steer the research.
- Specific **tools** needed to undertake designated activities (‘tactical’ tools).
- Need a **plan** to link tools, resources & people to methodology within given time framework.
- **Who** will develop the methodology and carry out research?



# The 'enquiry' approach

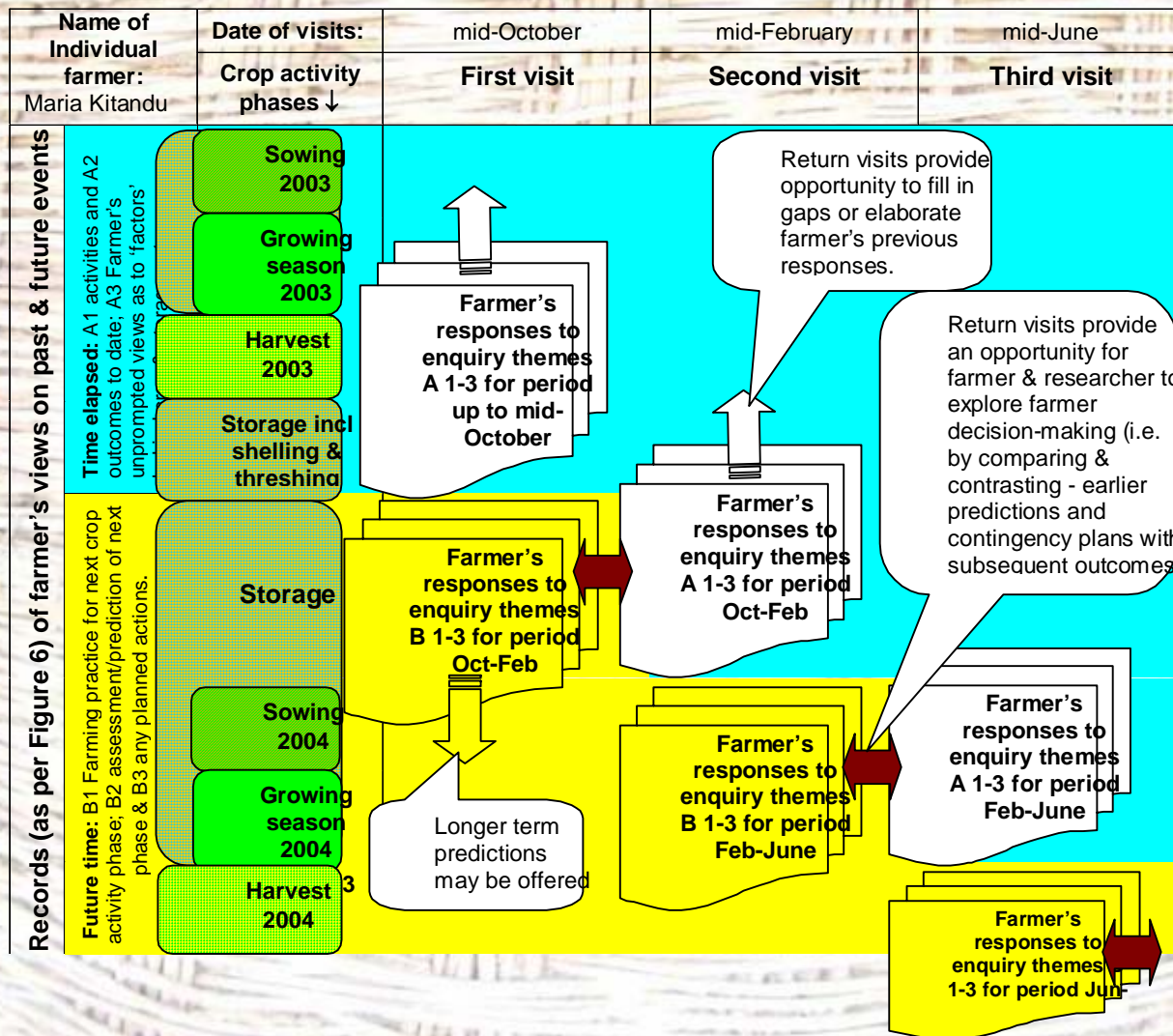
Figure 1. Framework for characterising individual farmers' views on crop production-storage phases, past, present and future





# The 'enquiry' approach

Figure 2. Records of farmer's views over time



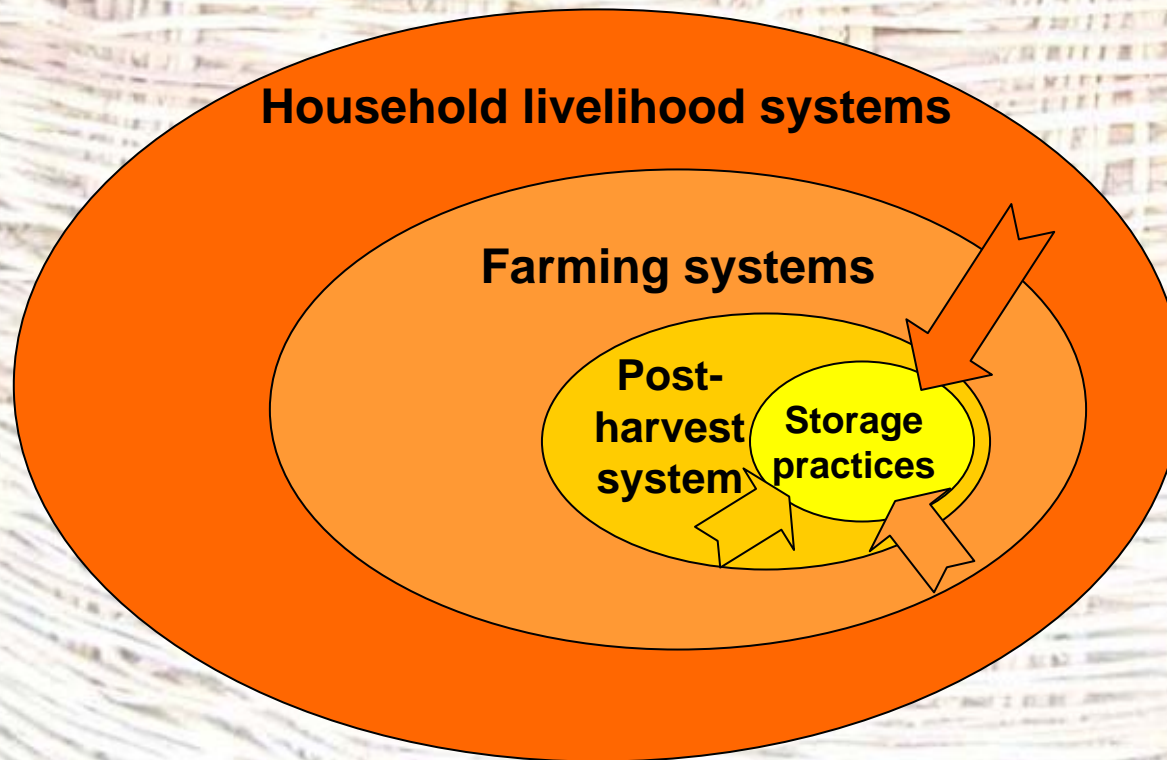


# Storage decision-making will be influenced by:

- **‘Post-harvest’ factors**
  - storage practices (e.g. cultural & technical)
  - quantity and quality of grain
  - timing & levels of infestation etc.
- **Farming system factors**
  - mixture of crops grown
  - cash *cf* food *cf* fodder crops etc.
- **‘Livelihoods’ factors**
  - HH size
  - social events (e.g. visits, funerals)
  - interventions (e.g. food aid, DE project)
  - market prices
  - seasonality



# Storage decision-making will be influenced by:



**Multiple factors associated with household livelihood, farming and storage systems**



# **Farmer participatory approaches (FPAs)**

- **Accept that farmers will have or show:**
  - **Expectations - team will be seen as people with access to knowledge, techniques, resources etc.**
  - **Suspicious - does the team have ulterior motives?**
  - **Deference - farmers may perceive team members as 'superiors'; team member behaviour might reinforce this.**
  - **Courtesy - farmers will not wish to offend.**



# **Farmer participatory approaches (FPAs):**

- **require trust to be built between researchers and farmers**
- **recognise farmers as experts in their own knowledge and experience**
- **acknowledge that both farmers' and team members' knowledge systems merit mutual respect**
- **respect and esteem farmers' agricultural practices and their way of life**
- **recognise that the success of the research depends on its relevance and usefulness to farmers, and**
- **acknowledge that farmers are therefore entitled to explanations and justification for the research**

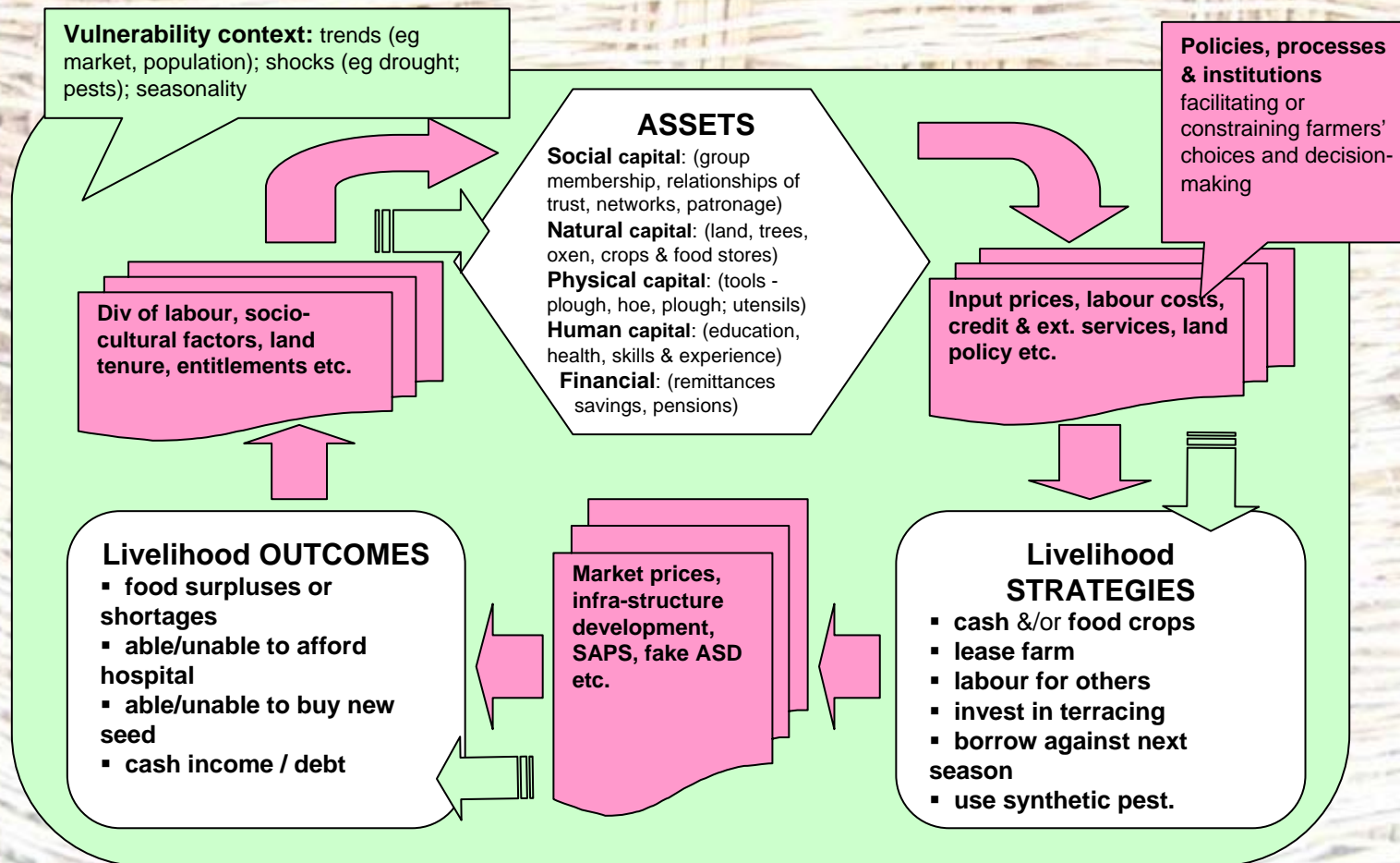


# **An organising principle**

- **Sustainable Livelihood approach(es)**
  - **takes account of the wider context & complex options confronting rural households**
  - **provides a checklist of important issues and sketches out the way these link to each other**
  - **centre-stages capabilities and resourcefulness of rural people**
  - **recognises diversity between and within farming households**
  - **provides an organising framework within which to structure our enquiry and analysis**



# Sustainable livelihood framework





# **The methodology**

**To help us develop understand of the factors that determine farmer or household decision-making has been based on:**

- Farmer participatory approaches (FPA) - to enable us to learn from farmers**
- A sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) - to provide us with an organising framework to facilitate analysis and understanding**



# Tools to undertake designated activities

- Wealth ranking to develop profiles of communities
- Exercise to determine relevance of farmer identity 'types' to project outputs, implications of identification & selection methods, and ease of application
- Farmer managed trials
- Enquiry framework and protocol



# Enquiry framework

- **Basic interview details**
- **FMT details & developments (if FMT farmer)**
- **Farmer's description of PH (or/and crop production) activities**
- **Farmer's estimation of PH (or/and crop production) outcomes**
- **Farmer's view on factors influencing PH (or/and crop production) activity outcomes**
- **Farmer's future plans**
- **Farmers information network**
- **HH livelihood strategies**
- **HH livelihood assets**



# Enquiry protocol

- **Introduce ourselves**
- **Refer to earlier activities & project purpose**
- **Explain specific objective of this enquiry**
  - **To hear from the farmer how the FMT is going**
  - **To learn from the farmer about factors that influence her/his decision-making**
- **Explain interviewer and recorder roles**
- **Focus of enquiry visit covers**
  - **Post-harvest & storage aspects**
  - **FMT grains and/or legumes**
  - **Farmer diversity, including gender & age aspects**



# **Emerging Lessons:**

- **Despite the limited progress interviews with farmers based on the enquiry framework have thrown up interesting insights**
- **Interviewers have been impressed with the information secured from farmers, which for the main body of the enquiry allows the farmer to speak freely**
- **Merit: can incorporate gender, age & other social stratification**
- **Merit: applicable to any household, any village**
- **Merit: adds value - methodology relevant even were DEs not to become available, affordable etc.**



# **Partially or unanswered questions:**

- Needs 'dedicated' officer (TZ) to ensure timely interviews, standardisation, gaps identified ..
- Identifying suitable MAFS personnel & issues of training.
- Analysis still underway - but looking good.
- Divide between public sector research and MAFS  
Confusion persists - witness remarks about 'intransigent' FMT farmers - about objective of FMTs. It's no longer about having farmers 'ape' research, but a tool to facilitate explanation of farmer decision-making



**Hope that didn't send you to  
sleep?**



**Thank you**



# Post-harvest/storage diversity

