

February 2020

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## IN THIS DIGEST

Dear Colleagues,

Agriculture has been a major employer across the globe and is at the center of discussions about poverty reduction and economic development. Yet, as countries develop, agriculture's role as employer declines. Robots can now do many of the remaining agricultural tasks. Rising anti-immigration sentiment also challenges the opportunity to address farm labor shortages in higher income countries through legal migration. So, what is the future of work in agriculture?

Much depends on how countries address these challenges. A fair share of those leaving the farm have historically found work in agriculture related activities up and down the chain (about 1/3 of off-farm labor in developing countries). Investment in rural education and agricultural extension will be equally important, to prepare for the digital age. And, as New Zealand shows, agricultural legal migration programs can be successful, for sending and receiving countries.

The publications and readings featured below provide a glimpse into the challenges ahead and possible policy responses. But most remains undocumented and poorly understood. The future of work in agriculture is an important space to develop and watch.

Sincerely,



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# THE FUTURE OF WORK IN AGRICULTURE

## Creating (Digital) Labor Markets in Rural Tanzania

Jeong | Working Paper | February 2020

The author develops and tests the effectiveness of an SMS-based messaging app that connects agricultural workers and employers. The treatment reduces within-village wage dispersion by 16-40 percent and labor is reallocated within villages.

Workers divert job applications from lower-paying to higher-paying employers.

## Automated Agrifood Futures: Robotics, Labor and the Distributive Politics of Digital Agriculture

Carolan | Journal Article | 2019

The paper presents a sociological account of how automation in US agriculture follows anticipated labor scarcity as borders close, while locking in certain realities with increasing dependency (for example on digital machinery providers for service), one of the neglected features.

## Youth Agrifood System Employment in Developing Countries: A Gender- Differentiated Spatial Approach

Dolislager, Reardon, Arsalan, Fox,  
Liverpool-Tasie, Christine & Tschirley |  
Paper | February 2020

The paper disputes the idea that youths do not work on the farm and cannot get wage

## Youth and Jobs in Rural Africa: Beyond Stylized Facts

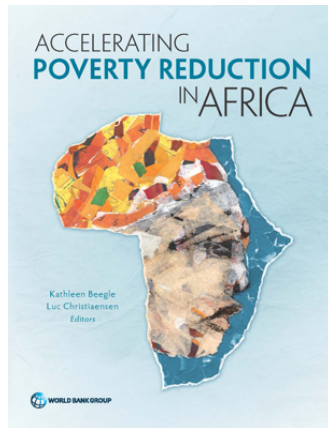
Mueller, Rosenbach  
& Thurlow |  
Book | 2019

The concluding chapter of the book revisits some of the stylized facts that

jobs. It's finds that youths work substantial hours on the farm and are in waged jobs with distinct spatial patterns.

shape the policy dialogue around youth employment in rural Africa.

# ESSENTIAL READINGS



## Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa: Earning More on the Farm

Christiaensen & Vandecasteele | Book | October 2019

The third chapter shows how: (i) much larger and more sustained public investment in smallholder staple crop productivity; and (ii) more public facilitation of inclusive value chain development for higher-value food products, can accelerate the labor productivity and earnings growth of Africa's poor.



## Creating Opportunities for Rural Youth

IFAD | Report | 2019

The report is based on substantive evidence and attempts to provide analysis that informs policies, to promote a rural transformation that is inclusive of youth. It examines who rural youth are, where they live, and the multiple constraints they face in their journey from dependence to independence.

## The Farm Labor Problem

Taylor & Charlton | Book | December 2018

The article explores the unique character of agricultural labor markets and the

## The Rapid Rise of Cross-Regional Agricultural Mechanization Services in China

Yang, Huang, Zhang & Reardon | Book | October 2013

The paper finds that farm companies have

implications for food production, farm worker welfare and advocacy, and immigration policy.

overcome the conventional economies of scales constraints by taking advantage of a national services market that includes labor and machinery.

### Labor Productivity and Employment Gaps in Sub-Saharan Africa

Ellen B. McCullough | Journal Article | February 2017

The paper finds that agriculture's relevance to structural change in Sub-Saharan Africa is highlighted by the strong linkages observed between rural non-farm activities and primary agricultural production.

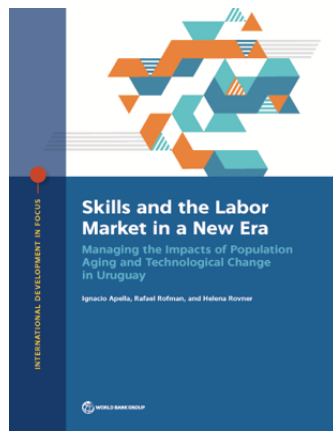
### Not Your Average Job: Measuring Farm Labor in Tanzania

Arthi, Beegle, De Weerd & Palacios\_López | Journal Article | October 2017

The paper examines the extent of bias in labor data by comparing labor estimates obtained through weekly surveys, and the results in a single end-of-season recall survey.

# THE BROADER JOBS AGENDA

## FROM THE WORLD BANK



### Skills and the Labor Market in a New Era : Managing the Impacts of Population Aging and Technological Change in Uruguay

Apella, Rofman & Rovner | Book | February 2020



### Convergence: Five Critical Steps toward Integrating Lagging and Leading Areas in the Middle East and North Africa

Work Bank | Report | February 2020

The book identifies how best to address the challenges that aging population and technological change pose through better-designed public policies, with a focus on the development of new skills that increase workers' productivity.

The report presents the five roots of spatial inequity in institutional inefficiencies across MENA-- which include urban regulatory frictions, education systems, public services, spatial mobility, market entry and lop-sided business environments.

### **The Dynamics of High-Growth Firms: Evidence from Tunisia**

Cruz, Baghdadi & Arouri | Working Paper | February 2020

The paper finds that high-growth status is more prevalent among small and young firms, as well as firms that export, import, or receive foreign direct investments.

### **Honduras Job Diagnostic**

Michel & Walker | Report | February 2020

The report shows how jobs in Honduras are related to persistently high poverty and disappointing growth over the last 20 years.

## **FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

### **Place-based Payroll Taxes and Regional Employment**

Ku, Schönberg & Schreiner | Blog | February 2020

The findings suggest that in settings with some degrees of wage rigidity, place-based payroll tax incentives can be effective in stimulating local employment.

### **Can referral improve targeting? Evidence from an agricultural training experiment**

Fafchamps, Islam, Malek & Pakrashi | Journal Article | May 2020

The paper finds that referral provides a slight improvement in targeting, however, rewarding or incentivizing referees does not improve referral quality.

### **Teacher Labor Markets in Developing Countries**

Crawford & Pugatch | Working Paper | February 2020

The paper finds that on the short run, while teacher supply increases with wages, teacher quality does not necessarily increase.

### **Land quality, land rights, and indigenous poverty**

Leonard, Parker & Anderson | Journal Article | March 2020

After controlling for fractionation, the findings suggest that land quality indirectly suppresses income growth through its effects on land rights.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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