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Are potato markets gendered? An analysis of  
gender networks in the potato marketing chain  
in the Tiraque watershed, Bolivia

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# Outline

1. The economic problem and its importance
  2. Current intervention to be examined
  3. Objectives
  4. Methods: data collection and analysis
  5. Major Findings
  6. Conclusions
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# 1. The economic problem and its importance

## 1.1. Access to markets

- Markets determine the rate and pattern of growth
  - Markets often fail for the poor when they are unable to access them, or can only access them on very unfavorable terms, due to:
    - High transaction costs, incomplete information, active discrimination (specially women)
  - Two key elements in efforts to break the cycle of poverty are:
    - Increase access to information through (ICT)
    - Reduce discrimination against women (gender)
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## 2. Current intervention to be examined

### Bolivia

- In Bolivia the topic of the market integration of farmers has received little attention.
    - ICT in rural Bolivia: Among the most important are:
      - Radio
      - Fixed telephone
      - Cell phones
    - Gender: Anecdotal information shows that women and men perform different tasks along the potato supply chain
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## 2. Current intervention to be examined

### Study area

- It is comprised of 14 communities, with a population of approximately 3000 inhabitants
    - Cell phones have become the most used communication technology among farmers and in the potato chain
    - Potato markets are perceived to be female dominated
      - Although the widely-held assumptions: Andean societies to be strongly male-dominated
  - Primary economic activities: Small-scale agricultural production
  - Primary social problems: low levels of income and lack of income-earning alternatives
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### 3. Objectives

- Describe the roles, responsibilities, actions and decision-making of small farmers
  - Describe the potato marketing chain in the Tiraque region, with a special focus on the role that gender and access to information play within it;
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## 4. Methods: data collection and analysis

- **Qualitative data:**

- Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA)
- Case Studies

- **Quantitative data:**

- SANREM Project Baseline Survey = 400 families in 18 communities

Market analysis will be conducted around potato production (most important crop)

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## 5. Major Findings

### 5.1. Description of the roles, responsibilities and decision-making of small farmers in rural Bolivia

- Gender roles and decision making: Division of labor and responsibilities within households including, production and marketing activities is intrinsic to gender in Andean societies.

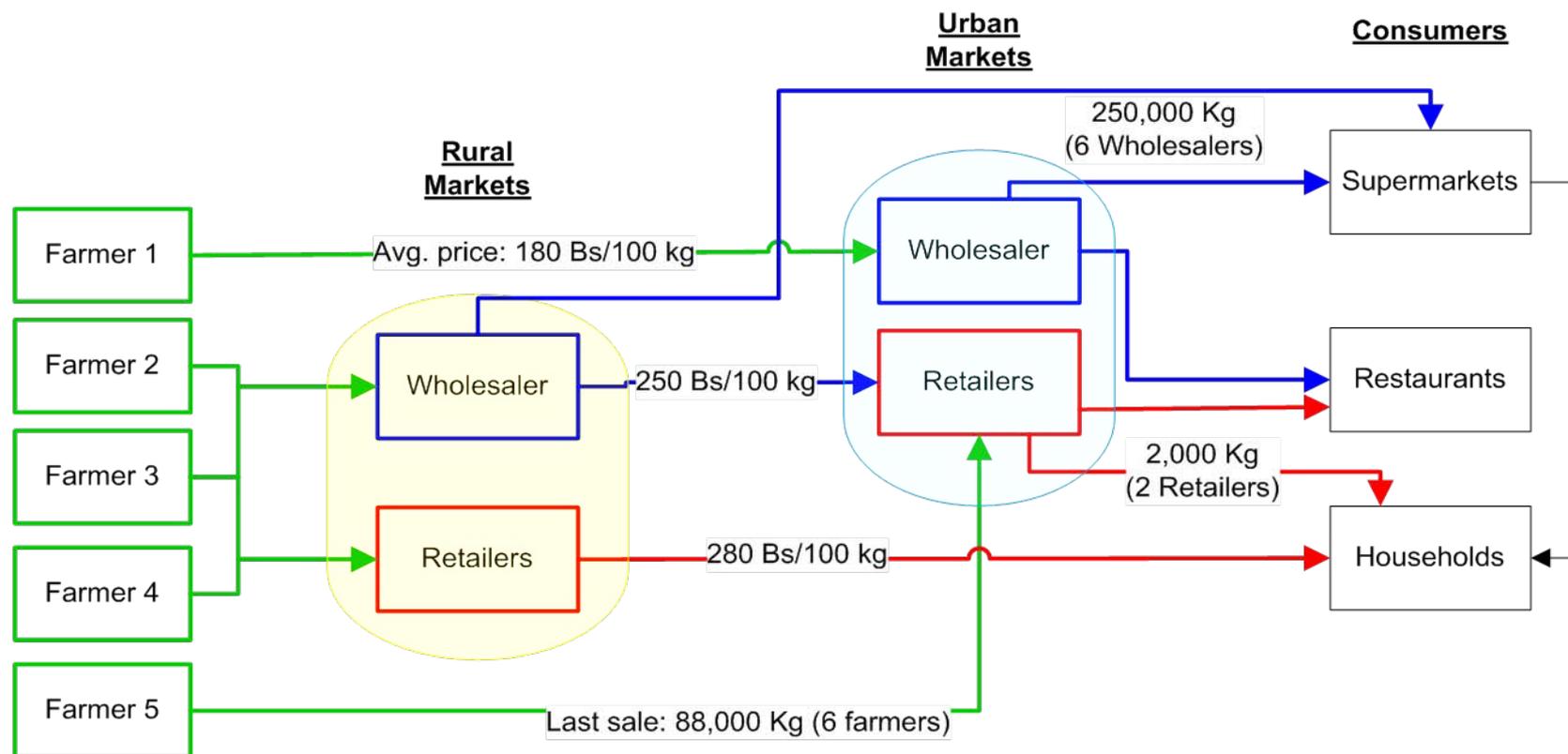
- ❑ Household
- ❑ Production
- ❑ Marketing
- ❑ Access to information



*Both go to the market, women are in charge, but men support them*

# 5. Major Findings

## 5.2. Description of the potato marketing chain in the Tiraque region



## 5. Major Findings

### 5.2. Description of the potato marketing chain in the Tiraque region

- The high participation of women in markets is striking.
- Women predominate in potato marketing, and their relationship with wholesalers, who are also mainly women, reinforces this advantage.
  - Gender has become a key element of potato marketing strategies.





## 6. Conclusions

- Efforts to improve incomes of potato producers should recognize women's roles, especially in marketing.
  - Gender plays an important role in access to markets
  - Nevertheless the nature of marketing networks has not changed sufficiently to allow them to have better access to information.
  - Basically the nature of marketing networks can be summarized by the phrase: “*among women, there is a better understanding*”.
  
- Cell phones = more access to information = more competitive farmers
  - Its success relies on the strength of farmers' social networks
    - Larger social networks imply larger and more trustworthy sources of information



Thank you