

Seasonal Forecast Game

Decisions under Uncertainty

#213

Objectives:

- To explore making decisions under uncertainty
- To explore the use and limitations of seasonal forecasts

Number of players: 10-20

Time: ~45 minutes

Materials needed: Spinning dial, 5 beans per player, 3 props

Facilitation skill: ★ ★ Somewhat challenging, needs careful facilitation, check if this is appropriate for the group



Relevance for climate resilience

The goal is to see how well each player / farmer can adjust their farming decisions based on seasonal forecasts. At the end of the game, participants should understand the possible uses and limitations of these forecasts, their personal risk taking preferences and how seasonal forecasts can affect livelihood decisions.



Climate
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Seasonal Forecast Game ★★



Process: (see video)

1. Set the scene
2. Give 5 beans to each participant (farmer)
3. Set the seasonal forecast (as determined by you; announce it or write it on a board for everyone to see).
4. Farmers group according to their investment plans
5. Spin the dial to get the actual weather conditions
6. Farmers pay or get paid based on their investment decisions (see table)
7. Repeat steps 3-6
8. Introduce wild cards at times (calamity/insurance) to keep things interesting
9. Play until very few players have beans left
10. End the game

Variation:

1. Adjust the narrative: players can farm anything such as sheep, sorghum or cattle.
2. Instead of focusing your seasonal forecasts on droughts versus heavy rainfall, you could focus them on the early or late onset of the monsoon or rainy season.
3. You can also tweak the mechanics of the game. For example, you could adjust how people gain or lose beans (see table) to speed up or slow down the game and create different levels of stress and anxiety.

Debriefing:

The debriefing is where the shared learning takes place. Example questions:

1. What did you experience during this game?
2. How does this experience link to sustainable and resilient farming practices?

Acknowledgement:

This game was introduced by “Indigo”.

Table with outcomes of decisions

Investment based on seasonal forecast	If actual weather is drier than average	If actual weather is wetter than average
Prepare for drought *1 bean to the bank* <i>Invest in extra feed, make sure water points are intact.</i>	Get 1 bean back (break even) <i>Livestock survive, but nothing thrives. Receive cost of investment but make no profit.</i>	Get 0 beans back (small loss) <i>Extra feed goes mouldy, lose out on other opportunities.</i>
Prepare for high rainfall *1 bean to the bank* <i>Invest in growing more fodder for livestock.</i>	Lose 2 beans (give 1 more bean to the bank: big loss) <i>No fodder grows, livestock die.</i>	Get 2 beans back (big win) <i>More and better quality fodder means that livestock thrive.</i>

Materials



Spinning dial with removable segments



5 beans per player



3 props representing insurance policies

