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“Resilience of agricultural systems against crises”

The Agricultural Extension Information Transfer Within the Rural Areas of Kembata Tembaro Zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This article examines the information transfer of agricultural extension in Kembata Tembaro zone, SNNPR, Ethiopia. Although the system of agricultural extension services is strongly supported by the Ethiopian government more interest is needed as one development agent (DA) is serving for 500 farmers which makes one of the highest rates all over the world. This study focused on the factors influencing the information diffusion among local farmers such as follows: status of farmer, status of advisor and different agricultural methods.

The data were collected among farmers, DAs, leaders of Farmer Training Centres (FTCs) and authorities by the form of formal interview. The crossing system for controlling data-relevance was used. The informal interview, participatory observation and searching the secondary data has been used also to complete the research methodology. The data were collected in period of October - November 2011 in cooperation with students from the Hawassa University within the development project “Enhancement of quality and extent of extension services in Kembata Tembaro” The data collected from 283 farmers and 32 DAs were analyzed by Statistical package for Social Scientist and summarized using descriptive statistics (modus, mean, percentage, bar graphs, pie charts, chi-square at $\alpha=0.05$ and odds ratio).

As the most important influence the position of advisor is considered. As the best advisor farmers in 59% denoted DAs, in 30% model farmers and just in 8% family. In the case of implementation modern techniques the DAs were indentified as the most reliable advisors in 87% and in the case of traditional techniques the family in 92% answers of farmers.

As a secondary influence the DA's and farmer's motivation (the farmer's motivation based on self-evaluation showed that 72% of farmers perceive themselves as innovators and none as a laggard), and DA's specialization is considered (the crop production experts were asked to cooperate the most frequently by farmers). Also there belongs the type of farming method, where the difference between model farmer and normal farmer in adoption of methods has been from 6 months in the case of planning methods up to 11 months in the case of soil and water conservation.

Additionally, the information transfer is influenced by grouping of farmers (as status within the special subgroup, social status and other).

This paper is helpful for policy makers as same as for field workers during implementing and planning methodology of agricultural extension in rural areas of Kembata Tembaro zone.

Keywords: Agricultural extension services, Ethiopia, information acceptance, information transfer, Kembata Tembaro zone