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“Bridging the gap between increasing knowledge and decreasing resources”

Effectiveness of Radio and TV Agricultural Information Programs in Sudan

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Abstract

Agricultural extension services in Sudan are not effective in delivering agricultural innovations to farmers, not least due to a small number of extension staff who are equipped with poor means of transportation. The purpose of this study is to assess whether radio and TV agricultural programs can compensate for the apparent shortcomings of direct extension methods.

A total of 840 farmers have been interviewed in six states of central Sudan. A purposive sampling approach and semi-structured questionnaire were used to collect primary data, which have been complemented with 40 in-depth household interviews to obtain qualitative information and triangulate the quantitative data. SPSS was used for statistical analyses.

The results revealed that 35% of respondents followed the agricultural radio programs at least sometimes, and 27% watched the agricultural programs on TV sometimes or more often. In comparison, 22% of respondents are exclusively covered by direct extension methods, and 24% of farmers had no access to any extension programs. ANOVA analysis revealed that the speed of adoption of 6 agricultural technologies by farmers is significantly increased with better access of farmers to sources of agricultural information. T-test analysis revealed that TV extension is significantly more effective than radio extension programs in changing farmers' attitudes and adoption of the investigated agricultural technologies, while both TV and radio are similar in changing the farmers' knowledge.

The study showed that radio and TV agricultural programs play an important role in compensating for the apparent shortcomings of direct extension methods. Recommendations refer to further improvement of the agricultural extension programs to achieve the aim of Sudan as one of three countries in the world which are expected to contribute effectively to global food security.

Keywords: Adoption of farm technologies, public extension, rural advisory services