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Awareness of Vegetable Farmers about Climate Change and the Level of Extension Service Provided in the Gambia

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Abstract

Climate change is a challenging issue in the world which occurs directly or indirectly due to human activities that change the composition of the global atmosphere, and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods. Farmers' awareness about this phenomenon is paramount in their day to day decision making. Extension service provision is often seen as a mean for disseminating scientific, technical progress and technology transfer. In the real sense, however, spreading of information or innovation is not a one-way issue from scientists to producers, but the bottom- top approach (from farmers to scientist) should be given importance. The study was conducted to assess the vegetable farmer's awareness about climate change and its impacts in Lower River Region of The Gambia. A multistage sampling procedure was employed in the selection of 202 vegetable producers. Data were summarised with frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. Finally, logit regression analysis was used to determine the factors influencing farmer's level of awareness about climate change. Results showed that about (75 %) of the population are in the active working group (25–50yrs) and they earn at least one thousand (1000) dalasi per annum. About 65 % of the respondents said, they are aware of climate change and its impact. Majority of them (94 %) have changed their cropping systems after experiencing climate change and (93 %) of the respondent said, they are now applying compost and neem leaf as an adoption measure to substitute chemical fertilisers and insecticide. The level of satisfaction of farmers with the services provided by the extension agent was medium (79 %). Factors such as household size, income level of the farmers, source of information and extension visit influenced awareness among the respondents about climate change and its impacts. It is therefore recommended that efficient extension services be rendered by competent extension agents who are under continuous training and retraining programmes, continuously supported by dynamic system of monitoring and evaluation and good government policy.

Keywords: Awareness, climate change, extension workers, keywords*, satisfaction, vegetable producers