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“Towards shifting paradigms in agriculture
for a healthy and sustainable future”

Effects of Communication Channels on Adoption of Orange Fleshed Sweetpotatoes in Uganda

BRENDA NAMULONDO¹, PHILIP NYAGA², KIMPEI MUNEI³

¹*National Agricultural Research Organization, Uganda National Genebank, Uganda*

²*University of Nairobi, Kenya., Veterinary Pathology, Microbiology and Parasitology,*

³*University of Nairobi, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Kenya*

Abstract

The need to shift paradigms to a positive relationship between humans, environment, ecology and nature in agriculture is of global concern. Efforts have been made by several organisations to produce only products in line with the need and disseminated through various pathways; however, most of the technologies hardly reach farmers. The study examined the effects of communication channels in adoption of Orange Fleshed Sweet potatoes (OFSP) in Gulu district, Uganda. Household survey research design was adopted as the main investigative design, using Semi structured questionnaires, FGDs and Key informant interviews, administered to 218 respondents, based on purposive sampling method. The results indicated that the most common communication channels used in order of importance by respondents were interpersonal – farm demonstrations (88 %), followed by mass media – radio (10 %). The adoption rates of OFSP were found to raise from 2 % in 2009, 13 % in 2010 and 85 % in 2011. In relation to the most informative source, 98 % strongly agreed that it was extension agent whereas 2 % simply agreed; 75 % strongly agreed that seminar was accessible while 25 % strongly disagreed; 80 % strongly agreed that radio had better coverage capacity while 2.6 % disagreed; 100 % strongly agreed that other channels (community trainers and print media) were frequently used. This implied that mass media was more effective in OFSP dissemination but auxiliary details were communicated through interpersonal channels. All the farmers who used the channels were adults of which 84 % were married. Of these, 65 % were female, 36 % had some source of income, 30 % had some formal education while 56 % belonged to a social group. In conclusion, radio and field demonstrations were the main sources of information. Therefore, the study recommended that multiple channels; specifically, radios, print media (Mass media) and farm demonstrations, focus groups (Interpersonal) should be considered as strategies for agricultural information dissemination and communication, respectively. The study also recommended that farmers' socioeconomic characteristics should be considered in technology adoption to effectively save the planet and enhance a healthy and sustainable future.

Keywords: Information dissemination, Interpersonal communication, Mass media, Technology adoption