Poultry Farmers’ Utilization of Information in Lagelu Local Government Area, Oyo State of Nigeria

O. Pipy Fawole

Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

Abstract: This study investigated poultry farmers' access and utilization of extension information in Lagelu Local Government Area of Oyo State. Data were collected using structured questionnaire. The results indicate that poultry farmers obtain information from a variety of sources with television been the most prominent (68%). Animal health it was found is the top information need of poultry farmers (52%). Severe constraints to poultry production are cost of obtaining information (64%), veterinary services (66%) and non-availability of extension agents (63%). The study further shows that poultry farmers’ sex and educational level are significantly related to sources of information. Similarly, poultry farmers’ sex and educational level are related to their utilization of information. Non availability of extension agents, cost of inputs are also significantly related to farmers’ utilization of information. The results imply that paucity of extension workers and increased cost of inputs reduce the probability of farmers utilizing available technologies or information.

Introduction

A major task in agricultural development is the transfer of improved technologies to farmers. Although extension institutions and various sources of information exist in almost every developing country, the coverage of farm families is still very limited. A link between farm families and research information is very important. Trends in Nigeria’s agricultural development scenario show that mass media have tremendous potentials for agricultural information dissemination (Yahaya, 2002). Specifically, Sonaiya (2004), indicated that extensive contacts in information sharing such as can be found in a network is required for development of animal production. This is because it will improve the performance of locally available animal production resources within the rural system.

The utilization of available information by farmers has also received attention in literature because it justifies among other factors, efforts by research and related organizations to improve farmers’ activities and output. Several studies have shown the potency of information dissemination approaches such as face-to-face, mass media, and posters to reach farmers of varying personalities because they are easily accessible to them. However, it is doubtful, if these farmers effectively utilize any information received, as performance in the agricultural sector is still low.

According to literature, only about 5% of Nigerian dailies’ news is agricultural, and this may not sufficiently complement the dissemination of information from other sources (Olowu, 1990). Low performance of agricultural centers has also been traced to the concentration of information centers in urban areas, non-integration of extension and research, non-usage of local language by print media and shortage of extension agents (Canagarajah et al., 2000) lack of agricultural inputs (Ojo and Plamers, 1998); and low educational level of farmers (Yahaya, 2003).

However, prospects for sustainable poultry production in Nigeria are high given locally available resources. One way to increase poultry production in Nigeria is through proper information dissemination, management and utilization. Sonaiya (1999) noted that development, documentation and dissemination of information and appropriate methods of data collection, collation, storage, retrieval and application on the field are essential. He reiterated that the poultry division of a unified extension system can use information gathered to promote rural poultry. Hill (1992) has described. The current free flow of information between and among countries, often referred to the information age (Hill, 1992), has enhanced information accessibility which has improved communication and advancement in technology. The poultry industry in Nigeria can take advantage of this development. However, for this advantage to be adequately exploited there is a need to determine the extent to which poultry farmers’ access and utilize information. Filling this gap will provide a basis for designing and effecting a strategic information dissemination approach specific to the needs of poultry farmers. It is therefore in this regard that Lagelu Local Government Area of Oyo state Nigeria was chosen for this investigation.

Materials and Methods

The population for this study is poultry farmers in Lagelu LGA of Oyo state Nigeria. This LGA was selected because of the high concentration of poultry farmers who
The average poultry size is 1,675 birds. This is an education.

scale producers. Approximately 47% own between

groups is low. Specifically, 27% are members of

own above 5,000 birds. Participation in socio-economic

the farmers are male. 40% had secondary education

years with a mean of 36.7 years. Eighty nine percent of

Indication that most of the poultry farmers are medium

demographic characteristics and their information-

farmers’ information sources are television (68%),

associations in the LGA. Data indicate that poultry

attributed to high membership fees of these

farm magazine (32%), non governmental organizations

(32%) and extension agents (26%).

produce and market poultry and poultry products in

that area of Oyo State. Essentially then, poultry
counts a significant component of the LGA’s income
generating activity. Three hundred and eighty poultry
farmers were identified in the LGA. From this sample
frame 120 poultry farmers were randomly selected.

structured questionnaires were developed and

administered on the selected farmers. The

questionnaires elicited responses pertaining to poultry
farmers’ demographic characteristics, information
needs as well as their sources, access and utilization of
information. Relationship between farmers’
demographic characteristics and their information-
related variables (sources, access, utilization and
constraints) were tested using chi-square statistics.

Farmers’ demographic characteristics included age,
educational level, sex, farm size, and participation in
socio-economic associations. Information sources and
usage were operationalized as points where information
emanated and frequency of application of accessed
information to farming activities. To measure
constraints, respondents were asked to react to eight
statements using a three-point scale, on constraints
experienced in accessing information. Farm size was
measured as number of birds owned.

Results and Discussion

The data on farmers’ demographics indicated that most
of the poultry farmers are between 36 years and 55
years with a mean of 36.7 years. Eighty nine percent
of the farmers are male. 40% had secondary education
while 15-30% had some form of post secondary
education.

The average poultry size is 1,675 birds. This is an
indication that most of the poultry farmers are medium
scale producers. Approximately 47% own between
1000-4000 birds, 43% own below 1000 birds and 11%
own above 5,000 birds. Participation in socio-economic
groups is low. Specifically, 27% are members of
farmers’ groups while 73% are not. This may be
attributed to high membership fees of these
associations in the LGA. Data indicate that poultry
farmers’ information sources are television (68%),
veterinary personnel (52%), handbill (47%) radio (43%),
farm magazine (32%), non governmental organizations
(32%) and extension agents (26%).

Respondents indicated varying use of information from
these sources. They use poultry information from
television (68%) and NGOs (27%). A majority of poultry
farmers (63%), however, do not use information from
extension agents (Table 1).

Data also indicate that animal health is a high
information need area of poultry farmers (52%).
Information related to other production requirements are
of low need. As regards constraints to accessing poultry
production information, the farmers feel that the cost of
obtaining information (64%), veterinary services (66%)
and non-availability of extension agents (63%) are
severe constraints while they regard inappropriate
time of broadcasting agricultural programmes (39%),
erable electricity supply (32%) and scarcity of day-old chicks
(43%) as less severe constraints (Table 2).

Significant relationships were established between
poultry farmers’ sex, educational level and their sources
of information (Chi-square = 0.13, p < 0.05 and Chi-
square = 8.01, p < 0.05 respectively). Yahaya (2001)
reported significant relationship between women’s
profile and contact with extension agents.

Relationships were also established between poultry
farmers’ sex, educational level and information utilization
(Chi-square = 3.64, p < 0.05 and Chi-square = 8.01, p <
0.05 respectively). Yahaya (2001) and Rumawi (2002)
reported similar results in previous studies that sourcing
of agricultural information and utilization is along gender
lines. They had posited that women are less likely to
participate because they have limited time to access or
utilize available information due to pressure of
household responsibilities.

This study also found significant relationships between
non-availability of extension agents, cost of inputs and
poultry farmers’ information utilization (Chi-square =
12.5, p < 0.05 and Chi-square = 3.48, p < 0.05
respectively). The results imply that scarcity of extension
workers and increase of input cost reduce the chance of
farmers buying or utilizing available technologies or
information.

This study acquired both descriptive and inferential
information about poultry farmers and their access and
utilization of information. Data collected show that the
respondents were highly literate and in their reproductive
age range. Large scale production was scanty.

Membership of association was rather low and
O. Pipy Fawole: Poultry Farmers' Utilization of Information

Table 2: Reaction to Information constraints Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Most severe</th>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Not severe</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary services cost</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information cost</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-availability of extension agent</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cost of input</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concealment of information by big poultry farmers</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarcity of Day-old-Chicks</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erratic electricity supply</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate airing time of agricultural programme</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

attributed to high membership fees. Poor financial base was linked to inability to adopt new technologies and access relevant information.

The data collected on access to information sources indicated concern about absence of extension personnel, scanty animal health services provided by private veterinary personnel, and limited access to production information. They also held a common view that the concerns expressed constituted severe constraints to their production activities. Use of information from radio, television programmes and private veterinary personnel were on monthly or quarterly basis. This is not adequate to increase poultry production.

Reaction towards access of relevant information indicated that the respondents agreed that absence of extension workers, scanty contact with private veterinary personnel and cost of obtaining information were severe constraints. However, inappropriate time of airing agricultural programmes, erratic electricity supply and scarcity of day-old-chicks are less severe constraints. These results indicate that information is crucial to production activities.

Chi-square analysis indicated significant relationships between sex, educational level and information sources. Significant relationship was also found between sex, educational level and information utilization. Similarly a significant relationship was found between non-availability of extension workers, cost of input and information utilization. Poultry farmers can be better reached by increasing presence of extension workers and strengthening communication method.

To increase poultry production in the study area, the extension delivery system particularly the communication and input delivery components must be strengthened. This will enable extension and related organizations to be in continual contact with the poultry farmers and together they can fashion out appropriate communication patterns, upgrade knowledge, attitudes and practices. Poultry farmers present one of the major groups that extension has and will continue to target.

References


