

Poultry Farmers' Access to Extension Services in Atisbo Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper examines the access of poultry farmers to extension services in Atisbo Local Government Area of Oyo State. A structured interview schedule was used to obtain data from a total number of 120 poultry farmers who were randomly selected from the study area. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages while chi-square and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation were adopted to test relationship between the variables. Findings reveal that majority (95%) of the farmers belonged farmers' association. 83.3 percent of the poultry farmers had access to extension services but with varying degrees of frequencies of visit; a larger proportion 59.2 percent have access at least once in a month. This has a positive implication for poultry production in the area. Loan recovery and home visit ranked the highest in terms of the services rendered to the farmers. Chi-square test showed significant relationship between poultry farmers' access to extension services and farmers personal characteristics such as sex ($\chi^2 = 9.09$, $P = 0.00$), educational level ($\chi^2 = 16.79$, $P = 0.00$) and membership of farmers' association ($\chi^2 = 15.33$, $P = 0.01$) at 0.05 level of significance. This study therefore recommends that extension service delivery should be more comprehensive so that farmers can derive maximum benefits as this will improve livestock production in the country.

Key words: Access · Extension services · Poultry farmers

INTRODUCTION

The poultry class of the livestock happens to be the largest and the most reared livestock in Nigeria either for subsistence or for commercial purpose. It involves the raising of domesticated birds such as fowls, turkeys, duck, geese and guinea fowl purposely for meat, eggs and other by-products. Poultry meat and egg production are very important means of bridging the gap in animal protein. The meat of poultry stands out of all livestock sources as it has very low quantity of cholesterol. This gives it a general acceptability among different age groups; both old and young. Also, no known taboo or belief is attached to poultry products' consumption. Therefore, the importance of poultry is of great importance to the national

economy, as it has become a popular industry for the small holders that have great contribution to the economy of the nation.

In Nigeria, efforts have been made to match the supply of poultry production particularly meat and egg with protein requirement of Nigerians, but a lot still needs to be done to close the existing gap. The average Nigerian diet still contains only about 7gm/caput/day and it is seen as a gross fall of 75% [1]. However, it was observed that protein intake had been on a decline due to ever increasing population [2]. This level of animal intake has direct effect on health and general well-being of the teeming Nigerian populace [3]. This situation can be improved upon by increasing livestock production through the access and use of extension services rendered to poultry farmers.

Extension services and availability of well-trained extension officers are expected to have effect on innovation of livestock management system and production. Trained extension officers are employed by government and sent to rural areas to educate the farmers on innovations about livestock management system [4] which will lead to livestock increase and consequent increase in protein intake. Different types of extension services are being rendered by extension agents to poultry farmers from which these farmers derive a lot of benefits. Some of the benefits include advisory services, disease management and other production management techniques all geared towards increasing poultry production and the enhancement of their income [5].

Although extension institution and various sources of information exist in almost every developing country, the coverage of farm families is still very limited [6]. Several studies have shown the potency of extension service approach such as face-to-face, mass media and posters to reach farmers of varying personalities because they are easily accessible to them. But it is doubtful if these media are performing their rightful functions to farmers as performance in the agricultural sector is still very low. Only about 5% of Nigerian dailies' news is agricultural and this may not sufficiently complement the dissemination of information from other sources [6, 7]. Some of the problems militating against extension service in most developing countries are identified as inadequacy and instability of funding, poor logistics support for field staff, ineffective agricultural research-extension linkage and disproportionate extension agents to farm family ratio among others [8]. These problems by implication also affect the extension services to the poultry sub-sector. Nevertheless, prospects for sustainable poultry production in Nigeria are high if relevant information is properly disseminated and utilized. From the foregoing, this study was conducted to examine the access of poultry farmers to extension services delivery in Atisbo Local Government Area of Oyo state. Specifically, attempts were made to determine the types of extension services rendered to poultry farmers, access and the frequency to their access to the services. Relationship between access to extension services and personal characteristics other selected variables was explored in the study.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study Area was Atisbo Local Government Area of Oyo State. The Local Government Area covers 16,200 sqkm lying between longitude 8°32'N and latitude

3°27'E. It comprises of twenty districts and ten wards. The districts include Tede which has two wards, Irawo with three wards, Ago-Are two wards, Ofiki, Owo, Sabe and Baasi with one ward respectively. Ethnic groups in the area include; Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo with different occupations; civil servants, traders, crops and livestock farmers and artisans.

The population of the study comprised of all the poultry farmers in Atisbo Local Government Area of Oyo State. A simple random sampling method was used to select four wards out of the ten wards in the Local Government Area. Thirty respondents were randomly selected in each of the four wards making a total of 120 respondents as the sample size for the study. Primary data were used in the study and the data were collected from the poultry farmers with the aid of interview guide. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages while inferential statistics such as Chi-square and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analyses were used to test the relationship between selected variables and access to extension services.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that most of the farmers (50.7%) were within the age range of 20-29 years. The mean age was 30.34. People in this age group are known to be in their active and productive ages. They are economically active [9], therefore, they have a higher tendency of contributing meaningfully towards improving poultry production in Nigeria despite the level of risks involved in the business. Majority (54.2%) of the farmers were female indicating that poultry farming is more prominent among the female in the area than the male. Women in most cases are noted for backyard poultry keeping along with their prominent role in post harvest handling. The result also shows that most (65.8%) of the respondents were married. This was perhaps the reason why backyard poultry is common in households so as to complement their effort in meeting households' financial and nutritional needs. Most of the farmers were fairly educated corroborating the earlier findings [10] that majority of the poultry farmers in Oyo area of Oyo state had tertiary level education. With this level of education recorded among the respondents in this study, there is a lesser tendency of depending on friends and relatives who may be more conservative than themselves for information on agricultural production. Result also shows that only 14.2% were involved in farming as primary occupation. This corroborates

Table 1: Personal characteristics of respondents

Personal characteristics	Frequency n = 120	Percentage (%)
Age (years)		
Below 20	2	1.7
20-29	60	50.7
30-39	43	35.8
40-49	8	6.7
50 and above	7	5.8
Mean = 30.34		
Sex		
Male	55	48.5
Female	65	54.2
Marital Status		
Single	41	34.2
Married	79	65.8
Educational level		
Never attended school	30	25.0
Primary Education	17	14.2
Secondary Education	40	33.3
Tertiary Education	24	20.0
Adult Education	9	7.5
Primary occupation		
Livestock farmers	10	8.3
Crop farmers	17	14.2
Traders	41	34.2
Artisans	5	4.2
Civil servants	20	16.8
Students	27	22.3
Membership of farmers' Association		
Members of farmers' Association	114	95.0
Non-members of farmers' Association	6	5.0
Monthly income (Naira)		
1000-5000	50	41.5
5001-10000	41	34.2
10001-15000	7	5.8
Above 15000	3	2.5
No response	19	15.5
Mean = 6366.67		

Table 2: Respondents' access to extension services and frequency of extension visit

Variable	Frequency n = 120	Percentage (%)
Access to Extension services		
Had Access	100	83.3
No Access	20	17.7
Frequency of extension visit		
Once in two weeks	43	35.9
Once in a month	28	23.3
Once in two months	21	17.5
Once in three months	14	11.6
Once in six months	7	5.8
Once in one year	7	5.8

previous findings [11] that, in spite of the importance of agriculture in Nigeria economy, it could no longer be considered as the foremost occupation. This has a negative implication on the level of agricultural

production in the area and, a negative implication on the struggle against poverty and hunger ravaging the Nigerian societies. Majority (95%) of the farmers belonged to social organizations. One major benefit of the group is that farmers support each other to learn and adopt [12]. Farmer-group approach plays valuable role in policy advocacy and in realizing economies of scale. When farmers are in groups, project implementation and trial of technologies become easier and cost effective for extension organizations. Membership of social organizations is an advantage in the adoption of improved poultry practices by farmers in the area. Most (41.5%) of the farmers had monthly income ranging from N1,000 to N5,000. The mean income of the farmers was N6,366.67 indicating a low income level among rural livestock farmers. 70% of those living below poverty level reside in rural areas [13].

Results in Table 2 showed that majority (83.3%) of the poultry farmers had access to extension services. This implies that poultry farmers had access to extension services in the study area agreeing with earlier report of a study that majority (61.7%) of farmers had contact with extension agents [14]. However, the frequency of access to extension services varies among farmers. A larger proportion (35.9%) of the respondents were visited by extension agents once in two weeks (fortnightly) which is the Training and Visit system of extension. The result also showed that 23.3% of the farmers had access to extension agents once in a month further implying that respondents' access to extension agents was relatively frequent. However, more still needs to be done to improve frequency of access to extension visits since the remaining substantial portion (40.7%) of the respondents had varied frequency of access from once in two months to once in a year. This situation is not in line with the recommendation of the T & V system.

A larger proportion of the farmers (30.8%) got information on poultry production through extension agents (Table 3) followed by the radio (28.3%). This indicates that most of the farmers got information through extension agents and the radio. It was found that majority of goat farmers had extension agents as their major sources of information on improved goat production practices [1]. Although the electronic media for example the radio has higher penetrating force than the extension visits, however, it lacks adequate demonstrative power to introduce new methodology to farmers. Therefore, there is need to complement the media sources with face to face method. To improve the ability of the traditional face to face/extension visits, poultry farmers

Table 3: Respondents' sources of information on poultry production

Sources on information	Frequency n = 120	Percentage (%)
Extension agent	37	30.8
Radio	34	28.3
Television	16	13.4
Friends/neighbours	12	10.0
Farmers' Association	21	17.5

Table 4: Extension services rendered to respondents

Extension services rendered	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
	n=120	(%)	
Home visit	28	23.3	2
Loan processing	29	24.2	1
Arrangement of poultry inputs supply	21	17.5	3
Securing market for poultry products	4	8.3	5
Capacity building	10	8.3	5
Recovering of loan	1	0.8	10
Arrangement of adult literacy class	7	5.9	7
Teaching use of poultry inputs	13	10.9	4
Organizing agric film show	1	0.8	10
Introduction of new poultry breeds	3	2.5	8
Assisting farmers to get veterinary services	3	2.5	8

Table 5: Summary of Chi-square analyses between farmers' access to extension services and selected variables

Variables	χ^2 value	d.f	P value	Decision
Sex	9.09	1	0.00	S
Marital Status	4.47	3	0.21	NS
Educational Level	16.79	4	0.00	S
Primary Occupation	5.69	5	0.33	NS
Source of Information	5.66	5	0.34	NS
Membership of farmers association	15.33	2	0.01	S

Level of significance: P < 0.05 d.f: degree of freedom NS: Not Significant S: Significant

Table 6: Pearson's product moment correlation analyses between farmers' access to extension services and selected variables

Variable	r value	P value	Decision
Age	0.02	0.87	NS
Income	-0.24	0.79	NS

Level of significance: P < 0.05 NS: Not Significant

can better be reached and methodologies demonstrated to them through their social organizations such as the local Poultry Farmers'

Table 4 reveals the various extension services rendered to the poultry farmers. Loan processing was ranked the first with 24.2% while home visit was ranked the second with 23.3%. The least ranked services were recovery of loan and organizing agricultural film show. The poultry farmers in the area were assisted by farmers through loan processing indicating that extension agents play a very important role in assisting farmers to obtain credit facilities from financial institutions. It can be deduced from the result that the extension agents played

little or no role in the recovery of loans granted to the poultry farmers. This situation has negative implication for financing of agriculture.

As shown in Table 5, a significant relationship exists between farmers' access to extension services and selected socioeconomic variables such as sex ($\chi^2 = 9.09$, P = 0.00), educational level ($\chi^2 = 16.79$, P = 0.00) and membership of farmers' association ($\chi^2 = 15.33$, P = 0.01). The result of the findings implies that the sex of the farmers is related to their access to extension services. Most of the time, extension activities are focused more on the male due to the prominence and availability in most rural areas. The women are more occupied with domestic chores. Lack of freedom unlike the males hinders their participation in extension activities. There is need to focus on the women since they play very active role in rural livestock production especially poultry. Farmers' educational level is related to their access to extension such that the higher the educational level of the farmers the better their access to extension services. In the same vein, membership of farmers' association is related to access to extension services. This further confirms the important role membership of organization plays in the farmers' access to needed information. Other personal characteristics such as marital status and major occupation did not have a significant relationship with access to extension services.

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis shows that farmers' income and age had no significant relationship with access to extension services (Table 6). This implies that none of the variables was significantly related to access to extension services.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study had examined the access of poultry farmers to extension services in Atisbo Local Government Area of Oyo state. Findings reveal that the poultry farmers being mainly women and members of farmers association had access to extension services at least once in two weeks. The extension services rendered to majority of the farmers were loan processing and home visit. Most of the services were rendered to only a very number of the poultry farmers. This situation may portend danger for livestock development in the area and the nation as a whole. Thus, it is recommended that extension service delivery should cover more areas of assistance so that farmers can derive maximum benefits as this will improve livestock production in the country.

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