Agricultural Information Sources and their Effect on Farm Productivity in Kenya

Authors

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Key messages

- The three major sources of agricultural information in Kenya are Public, Private nonprofit and private for-profit. Public sources include Government extension agents and Research organizations; Private nonprofit include Non-governmental Organizations, Farmer Organizations, Community Based organizations, other farmers, while Private for-profit include Private firms, processing and marketing enterprises among others.
- Farmers’ preference of any source is significantly influenced by a number of socio-economic characteristics including age, household land size, group membership, value of assets and ownership of a mobile phone.
- Despite a wide variety of agricultural information sources available, a relatively low number of smallholder farmers are accessing agricultural information.
- Public extension is still the most utilized source of agricultural information in Kenya.
- Gender differential is evident, where a relatively small proportion of female headed households received extension services compared despite their vital role in the agriculture sector.
- Although the public extension has been criticized for its inefficiency, this depends on the enterprise in question.
- Farm visits are the most common utilized communication channel by public and public for-profit service providers. This partly explains the low extension coverage since there are limited number extension workers in the country.

Policy Recommendations

- Increased investment in extension is necessary to achieve the desired results of transforming smallholder agriculture.
- It is necessary of disseminate gender sensitive technologies & interventions to enhance adoption.
- There is need to strengthen the coordination between public and private extension service providers to enhance efficiency in delivery of extension service.
- Extension service providers need to adopt appropriate dissemination channels (or a combination of different channels) to reach more farmers e.g. group approach.
- Integration of ICT in extension, especially the use of mobile phones can increase coverage.
- Other ICT platforms like internet can also be used to improve coverage. However, adequate capacity building is needed for both extension staff and farmers who are the end users.

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