Agricultural information needs and sources of the rural farmers in Tanzania: A case of Iringa rural district

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Abstract

Purpose

– This study aims to determine information needs and sources of the rural farmers in Tanzania specifically from Iringa rural district.

Design/methodology/approach

– Survey technique was used as the principal data collection technique where 120 rural farmers were interviewed. In-depth interviews of ten key informants from two villages of Ifunda and Kalenga complemented the survey.

Findings

– 70 per cent of farmers' information needs is about crop and livestock husbandry, marketing, funding options and value addition. However, there is a significant difference between the two wards in information needs for “information on crop and livestock husbandry” as well as information on “value addition”. To a great extent, farmers use the old means of communication, the traditional and interpersonal by default due to relevancy in the context and content. The modern means of communication are used to access non-agricultural (other) information.

Research limitations/implications

– Designing effective extension and dissemination programs should consider the needs and mechanisms desired and preferred by specific group of farmers.

Practical implications

– There is heterogeneity within farming communities in terms of information needs which requires a consideration by intervention programs.

Originality/value

– The study identifies information needs and sources of rural farmers. It points out that needs of the farmers are not static and they change over time. Though farmers largely use old means, the modern communications means have the potential of being better sources should the information producers upload relevant and context-specific information.

Keywords:

Developing countries, Information needs, Information sources, Rural farmers, Tanzania