

SUBJECT: AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE

TOPIC: AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

CLASS: SS3

WEEK: WEEK TWO (2)

TERM: 1ST TERM

THE MEANING OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

Agricultural extension can be defined as a process of disseminating information about new farming techniques from research station to rural farmers through extension agents.

The extension agents usually get feedback from rural farmers to the research station. Such feedback is used by researchers to carry out more research on agricultural problems.

The objectives or importance of agricultural extension

1. To teach farmers on how to improve their farming practices especially in the area of crops and livestock production, processing and marketing.
2. To disseminate useful information about the new system of farming from researchers to the rural farmers and also to get feedback from the farmers to the researchers through government extension agents. It therefore acts as a link between researcher and rural farmers.
3. It helps in procurement and supervision of agricultural loan.
4. It helps farmers to change their attitudes towards their problems
5. It also helps to raise the standard of living of farmers.
6. It helps farmers to identify proper marketing channels for the sales of agricultural produce.

Agricultural extension programmes in Nigeria

Agricultural extension services in Nigeria have used several approaches to increase crops and animals production .some of the extension programmes organized by government to boost agricultural are;

-farm settlement schemes (FSS)

-River basin development authorities (RBAA)

-the national accelerated food production programme (NAFPP)

- Green revolution (GR)

- Directorate of food, road and rural infrastructure (DFRRI)

-Agricultural development project (ADP)

METHODS OF DISSEMINATING INFORMATION TO FARMERS

There are three main methods used in disseminating information on new farming innovation to farmers. These methods are as follows;

1. Individual method
2. Group method
3. Mass media method

INDIVIDUAL METHOD

This is the direct contact between farmers and extension methods are;

- farm visit
- home visit
- telephone call
- E-mail
- G.S.M
- Internet

GROUP METHOD

This is the method whereby the extension agents meet with the farmers in group.

Examples of group method are;

- group discussion
- agricultural show
- symposia
- lectures
- debates ,excursion, field trips and group demonstration.

MASS MEDIA

This method involves the dissemination of information by extension agents to large number of farmers living in different location at a time .examples of mass media are; radio, television , newspapers ,pamphlets ,banners ,handbills ,magazines etc.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD EXTENSION WORKER

1. INITIATIVE: An extension agent must be able to take certain decision pertaining to particular problems ,he or she must be able to take actions without being directed.

2. **HONESTY:** He or she must be reliable, he should let his or her yes be yes and no be no, most rural farmers prefer to deal with reliable and honest people.
3. **COMMUNICATION SKILLS:** Extension workers must be able to speak the language of his or her clients; he or she must also be able to convince farmers that the new method of farming is better than the old method that they are used to.
4. **HE OR SHE SHOULD BE FREE FROM LOCAL POLITICS:** he or she should not participate in the local politics.
5. **GOOD EXTENSION WORKER:** good extension worker should respect the culture, tradition and religion of the farmers, a good extension agent should not feel superior to the farmers, he or she should be able to come down to their level, he should associate with them and eat what they eat ,drink the type of water they drink possibly dress like them.
6. **PUNCTUALITY:** he or she should always make him/herself available in all the meeting scheduled with the farmers. The meeting should always be fixed at the convenient time for both him/herself and the farmers.

FUNCTION OF AN EXTENSION AGENT

1. He or she teaches farmers new farming techniques.
2. He or she acts as a link between researcher and the farmers.
3. He or she gets feedback from the farmers to the researchers.
4. He or she assists farmers to improved implements.
5. He or she also assist farmers to source for loan so as to enable them to buy farm inputs

PROBLEMS CONFRONTING AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AGENTS IN NIGERIA

1. **ILLITERACY:** Most farmers are illiterate, so they are used to their old methods of farming .they find it difficult to adapt to new farming techniques.
2. **TRANSPORTATION:** transportation problems such as bad roads, fuel scarcity, high cost of transportation agents from going to rural areas.
3. **LANGUAGE BARRIERS:** Most extension workers could not speak the local language of their clients. This may affect the teaching of new innovation.
4. **FARMERS NON-CHALLENGE ATTITUDE:** Farmers have non-challenge attitude to planning and organizing of extension programmes because they see programmes as their programmes and not our programmes therefore they are not committed to such programmes.
5. **POOR FINANCE:** the extension programmes are not adequately financed by the government.

ASSIGNMENT

1. What is agricultural extension?
2. What are the importance of extension to farmers and government ?

