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Dissemination of Information on Management of Pesticides to Rural Farmers in Oyo State, Nigeria

F. O. Sangowusi

This study discovered that advance information on the positive aspect of pesticides is still scare to the Agricultural Extension workers especially Technical Journals in Nigeria. It is essential that those involves with pesticides, in their use, regulation or production and distribution should have ready access to up-to-date information. If information on pesticides is not available, resources be wasted, the health of human and livestock may be at risk and environment disasters may occurs.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years Nigeria have witnessed a rapid growth of the agricultural sector. The number of individuals going into subsistence farming has greatly increased, this phenomenon is partly due to the economic recession in the country. However, farmers need to be informed about the general principles of agriculture especially the hazard as related to the use of pesticides. Information on the appropriate use of pesticides in the developing world is still scare, there is lack of funds for conducting research on the effects of pest control. There is need for continuing chain of activities in research, development and implementation of agricultural development programs. An extension agent is expected to be technically skilled in his subject matter, that is he should be knowledgeable in production, processing and marketing of a particular crop or livestock (Obinne and Jimoh: 1996). Ogunromibi and Oladokun (1993), Ruseell (1981) and Akinbode (1997) also affirmed that in addition to technical information, Agriculture Extension Workers (AEW'S) require information in areas such as commercial, legal and social aspects of agriculture.

Appropriate information management contribute to safeguarding national food supplies and promote international trade by preventing the distribution of unwanted pesticide. Information evolves through various stages of quantitative analysis and validation, after which it will be processed into a suitable form to serve as a foundation for intelligent and rational decision making. The extension agent according to Obinne and Jimoh (1996) is the individual responsibility is to motivate, encourage and help the farmers to solve his farm problems. Extension services also serve as a bridge between the farmers' problems and the source of potential solutions.

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To facilitate decision by farmers, extension agents need to have access to technical information that they transfer to their clients. Therefore information according to Howe (1983) is the outcome to inquiry and different problems which will need different methods of inquiry. The way rural farmers perceive the information on pesticides depends on how Agricultural Extension Workers improve the information and guidance they give. This paper emphasized some activities the Agricultural Extension Workers could engage in the dissemination of timely and adequate information on pest and pesticides to rural farmers. This is because extension workers are also the source of information about the potential control measure on pest management by disseminating the right information on the use of pesticides. The objectives of this paper therefore are:

- (a) to evaluate the role of Oyo State Agricultural Development Programme (OYSADEP) Extension Workers in the Dissemination of Information on the use of pesticides.
- (b) To find out if the sources of information on pesticides affect the AEW's mode of disseminating information.
- (c) To establish the relationship between the purpose and method of disseminating information.
- (d) To establish the relationship between the purpose and method of disseminating information.

METHODOLOGY

The area of study is the Ogbomoso Zone of Oyo State, Nigeria. The Pgbomoso Zone contains five blocks for efficient performance of its workers. The five block are: Oloo, Ajaawa, Ikoyi, Iresaadu and Gambari. One of the goals of OYSADEP is to reach the rural populace with a view to improve their standard of living through increase in their income. This is in line with the view expressed by Mumford (1981) that "Pest or animals diseases or weeds give farmers two causes for concern: they cause direct loss by reducing revenue and they present the decision problem of how to reduce this loss"

A structural questionnaire was designed for this study and was randomly distributed to the extension workers in the Ogbomoso Zonal headquarters in 1998. However out of the one hundred and fifty questionnaires distributed to the extension workers, one hundred and fourteen questionnaires were returned representing a 76% response rate. The data was analyzed by using simple statistical technique such as frequency table, raw figures and percentages, Chi-square analysis was always used to check if the was any relationship between the purpose and method of disseminating information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Majority of the respondents were male (76.3%) while 23.7% were female extension workers. They have different educational backgrounds 50% of the respondents are Higher National Diploma (HND) Holders, 37% are Ordinary Diploma (OND) while 13% are University graduates. The study revealed that all the respondents have had one training or the other on how they can disseminate information on management of pest and use of pesticides to the rural farmers in their different blocks. Their responses revealed that they go for training programmes such as the Monthly Training Programme and Forthrightly Training Programme in different locations like Saki, Ogbomoso and also at the School of Pest Control in Kaduna. Table 1 affirmed that their major source of information on pesticides is at their Monthly and Forthrightly Training Sessions because 100% of the respondents agreed to this. However, 21.05% of the respondents also indicated that they had attended seminars organized on pest/pesticides while 13.15% indicated that they had attended workshops. None of the respondents indicated the use of the research Journals as a source of information on pesticides. This is contrary to study carried by Ogunrombi and Oladokun (1993) which revealed that "documentary sources of information produced by agricultural organizations such as Technical reports and Agricultural Extension Literature were most frequently consulted source" of information by OYSADEP Extension Workers. Lack of good library facilities and financial constraints in the country may be responsible for this.

The most important reason why OYSADEP Extension Workers, as revealed by, Table 2, disseminate information on pest/pesticides is to ensure that pests that are already in the farmland are destroyed to forestall further damage to the crops, this accounted for 36.84%. This study also reveals that 26.32% of the respondents disseminate information on pest to ensure that pests do not get into the field. However 21.05% feel that they disseminate information because they want the farmers to keep pests below the damage threshold level while 15.7% of the respondents feel they disseminate information to ensure that pests have little change to multiply.

It is clearly established from Table 3 that physical demonstration on how to use pesticides on the field is dominant as a method of disseminating information on pesticides with a response rate of 68.42%. Advising farmers on individual basis (31.58%) is also a method that OYSADEP Extension workers use. The OYSADEP AEW'S do not make use of visual aids, film shows or the mass media.

Efforts were made to establish if there was any relationship between the purpose and method of disseminating information. It was observed that the methods of disseminating information are independent on the purpose of disseminating information since the observed value of X^2 is less than the critical value of X^2 at 5% level of significance (Table 4,) the null hypothesis is accepted. It is therefore

concluded that the methods of disseminating information that is by demonstrating to the farmers in the field and by advising the farmers, are independent of the purposes of disseminating the information.

The respondents were asked if the farmers are informed about the hazards that accompany the use of pesticides, all their response were affirmative. However, they were further asked about the problems that the farmers are facing in applying the techniques they have been taught on the application of pesticides, their response shows that safety problems in using pesticides was ranked highest by the respondents with 76.32% considering this as a major problem faced in the application of pesticides is also a problem to the farmers with a response of 23.68%.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The widely use of pesticides is partly due to the advantages they offer. The key factor in reducing pesticides related problems and ensuring that their benefits outweigh their disadvantages is information.

The Oyo State Agricultural Development Programme (OYSADEP) Extension agents needs to concentrate more on disseminating information on pest/pesticides in a way that would have impact on the farm products. This could be done by getting in touch with the different groups of farmers in the state, coming down to their level and regular monitoring of the information disseminated. In spite of high investment in extension relative to research, there is still a serious shortage of funds faced by the Agricultural Development Programmes in Nigeria. This means that personnel would be badly paid and would not have sufficient means to conduct their work satisfactory. Moreover, it occurs frequently that bureaucratic and administrative work keep extension officers from getting down to the actual extension task. The greatest problem of relevance to this study is that, there is lack of information relevant to farmers which makes it very difficult to take a realistic message on the of pesticides to the rural farmer. It is therefore necessary for Agricultural Extension officers to get specific and timely information on the hazards as related to the use of chemical pest control. To reduce the gap of information on management of pesticides between farmers and the Agricultural Development Agencies, the Agencies through the Federal government should gather valuable information from international bodies like FAO and WHO about policies regarding pesticides in rural development projects.

Table 1: Sources of Information

Sources	Respondents Number	%
Seminars	24	21.05
Workshops	15	13.15
Training Session	114	100
Research Journals	0	0.00
Others	0	0.00

Sources: Field Survey, 1998.

Table 2: Purpose of Disseminating Information

	Purpose	Respondents No.	%
(1)	To keep the pests below the damage threshold level	24	21.05
(2)	To ensure that the pest does not get into the field	30	26.32
(3)	To ensure that the pest has little chance to multiply	18	17.79
(4)	Eliminating the pest	24	36.84
	Total	114	100

Source: Field Survey, 1998

Table 3: Method of Dissemination Information

	Method	Respondent No.	%
a.	Demonstration in the field	78	68.42
b.	Visual aids	0	0.00
c.	Advising individual farmers	36	31.58
d.	Seminars	0	0.00
e.	Mass Media	0	0.00
f.	Film show	0	0.00
	Total	38	100

Source: Field Survey, 1998.

Table 4: Relationship Between the Purpose and Method of Disseminating Information (DI)

Purpose of DI	Method of DI	
	Demonstration in the Field	Advising Farmers
a. To keep the pest below threshold level	18	6
b. To ensure that the pest does not get into the field	21	9
c. To ensure that the pest has little chance to multiply	12	6
d. Eliminating the pest	27	15
Total	78	36

calculated $X^2 = 0.88$

Critical Values of X^2 at 5% and 1 % of level of significance are 6.25 and 9.84 respectively

Source: Field Survey, 1998.

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