

COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOUR OF CATTLE FARMERS IN BATTICALAO DISTRICT

¹T., Geretharan, ²C. Sivayoganathan, ³M. M. Mahusoon

¹ Department of Agric. Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

² Department of Agric. Extension, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

³ Department of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

Keywords: Cattle farmers, communication sources, information

Introduction

Intensive care and use of improved agricultural technologies by the farmers are the key issues for increasing and maximizing production. But most of the farmers have not yet adopted improved agricultural technologies though suitable technologies are available. One may quite logically assume that the messages of improved technologies have not yet been properly conveyed to the farmers. It may also happen that the technologies that have been developed do not reach to the end users effectively for their application. The farmers usually are exposed to various forms of communication media to collect information (Hossain *et al*, 2011). It is an established fact that communication is the backbone of the development of the society. Up to a few years ago the diffusion of innovation research established the importance of communication in the modernization process at the local level. In the dominant paradigm communication, was visualized the important link through which exogenous ideas entered into the local communities (Rogers1983; Melkote1991). With the advancement of information technology common people are having easy access to a number of information channels and sources. The cattle farmers of Batticaloa are also having access to different sources and channels of information due to this explosion of information. The present study was carried out to explore the communication behaviour of the farmers in receiving information in improved cattle technologies.

Methodology

A Questionnaire study was designed for this study to assess how cattle farmers' communication behaviour varies in receiving information on improved technologies in Batticaloa district. The population of this study consisted of cattle farmers from two veterinary ranges (Kaluwanchikudy and Chenkalady) in Batticaloa district. A total of 120 cattle farmers were randomly selected for this study. Secondary data necessary for the study were also collected.

Discussion and Conclusion

Socio-economic characteristics of cattle farmers

The study has shown that most of the people involved in cattle rearing in Batticaloa district were males, between 36 to 50 years. Most of the farmers (72.5%) had herd size ranging from 1 to 10 and had the farming experience from 6 years to 10 years. Around 84% of the cattle farmers reared cattle for milk and meat purpose, and majority of them reared local breeds.

Utilization of individual and group communication sources

Communication sources which can be individual, group or mass play a crucial role in the adoption of new technologies. Utilization of these communication sources significantly contribute towards the adoption of new technologies.

Table 1 explains the utilization of individual and group communication sources by the cattle farmers in the district. When considering the individual communication sources, cattle farmers

frequently got information from the Livestock Development Officers (mean score 1.95) followed by Veterinary Surgeons (mean score 0.958). And in the group communication sources, cattle farmers gained information from meetings (mean score 1.96) followed by group discussions (mean score 1.08). Based on the total score obtained individual and group communication sources were categorized into low, medium and high usage. Table 2 explains the use of individual communication sources by the cattle farmers in the Batticaloa district; 85.8% of the farmers were low users of individual communication sources and 7.5% were very low users of individual communication sources. And rest of the farmers were medium users of individual communication sources. Table 3 explains the use of group communication sources by the cattle farmers in the Batticaloa district; 77% of the farmers were low users of group communication sources and 40% were medium users of group communication sources. And rest of the farmers were high users of group communication sources.

Table 1: Utilization of individual and group communication sources

Communication Sources	Frequency			Total Score	Mean Score
	Always	Sometimes	Never		
Individual communication source					
Veterinary Surgeon	03	111	06	117	0.98
LDOs	114	06	00	234	1.95
University staff	02	06	112	10	0.08
Neighbour/relatives/friends	00	08	112	08	0.07
Village leaders	00	07	113	07	0.06
Progressive farmers	00	06	114	06	0.05
Group Communication Source					
Field day	00	05	115	05	0.04
Group discussion	09	111	00	129	1.08
Meeting	115	05	00	235	1.96
Demonstration	11	06	103	28	0.23
Training	05	08	108	18	0.15

Table 2: Overall use of individual communication sources

Category	Frequency	Percent
Very Low (0 – 2.3)	09	7.5
Low (2.4 – 4.6)	103	85.8
Medium (4.7 – 9.2)	08	6.7
High (9.3 – 14.0)	00	0.0
Total	120	100.0

Table 3: Overall use of group communication sources

Category	Frequency	Percent
Low (0 – 2.3)	77	64.2
Medium (2.4 - 4.6)	40	33.3
High (4.7 – 10.0)	03	2.5
Total	120	100.0

Table 4: Utilization of mass communication sources

Communication Source	Frequency	Percent
Television	19	15.8
Radio	18	15.0
Leaflets	16	13.3
Newspaper	16	13.3
Fair exhibition	13	10.8
Poster	05	4.2
Tape recorder	00	0.0
Film	00	0.0
Farm magazines	00	0.0

Table 4 gives the details about the utilization of mass communication sources by the cattle farmers in the Batticaloa district. Low usage of mass communication sources was recorded in the district. Around 15% of the cattle farmers were getting cattle related information from television and radio followed by newspapers and fair exhibitions. These results are in accordance with the findings of Shih and Evans (1991) and Dinpana and Lashgarara (2011) where they reported about the low usage of mass communication sources by the farmers in receiving farm information.

The study has shown that most of the people involved in cattle rearing in Batticaloa district were males, between 36 to 50 years. Most of the farmers (72.5%) had herd size ranging from 1 to 10 and had the farming experience from 6 years to 10 years. Around 84% of the cattle farmers reared cattle for milk and meat purpose, and majority of them reared local breeds. From the individual communication sources, cattle farmers frequently got information from Livestock Development Officers followed by Veterinary Surgeons. In the group communication sources, they gained information from meeting followed by group discussions. Nearly half of the population was never using mass communication sources to get information.

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