

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)

Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

---

10-11-2021

## Utilization of New Media for Agricultural Information by Farmers in South-South Nigeria

Friday O. Idiku

*University of Calabar, Nigeria, idikuf@gmail.com*

Hilda Chia Eta

*University of Calabar, Nigeria*

Ginini Francis Eleme

*University of Calabar, Nigeria, evaleniye@yahoo.com*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#)

---

Idiku, Friday O.; Eta, Hilda Chia; and Eleme, Ginini Francis, "Utilization of New Media for Agricultural Information by Farmers in South-South Nigeria" (2021). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 6449. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/6449>

**UTILIZATION OF NEW MEDIA FOR AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION  
BY FARMERS IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA**

**IDIKU, F.O, ETA, H. C and Elemi, G. F  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION  
AND RURAL SOCIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, CALABAR  
[idikuf@gmail.com](mailto:idikuf@gmail.com),      hildajens@yahoo.com**

## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the utilization of new media for agricultural information by farmers in the south-south region of Nigeria. It was carried out in the south-south region of Nigeria. A multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select respondents. Three states and 36 agro-cells were randomly selected from the region giving a sample size of 360 Farmers. A set of structured questionnaire was used to illicit information from the farmers. Findings revealed that most (93.8%) farmers in the region were aware that the internet is a source for agricultural information. The study established that 48.9% of farmers in the study area use new media like the internet to get information on early warning and management of pests/diseases, 47.5% use it to receive information about credit facilities, 47.2% use it for weather forecast information, 46.7% for online information on solutions to farmers' problems and another 46.7% use it to obtain information on linkage to extension agents and research. The study therefore recommended that public private partnerships with telecommunication service providers should be initiated and encouraged so as to enhance access to new media as well as types of agricultural information developed and made available to farmers via these sources.

**Keywords:** Agricultural information, farmers, Internet, new media, utilization

## **INTRODUCTION**

The leading sector of the economy of several developing countries is agriculture supporting the livelihoods of almost 60% of the population. The agricultural sector is important for economic growth, poverty reduction, rural development and enhancing food security (Mbagwu, Benson & Onuoha, 2018). In other words, majority of the rural population in developing countries depend on agriculture for survival (Stienen, Bruinsma & Neuman, 2017). In spite of the importance of the agricultural sector as a source of livelihood for majority of Africans, the sector is still very unproductive, resulting in food insecurity and large importation of staple foods (Verder-chouhare & Karaguezian, 2016).

In Nigeria, the information technology approach is gradually spreading and obviously with time will be fully integrated into the agricultural systems (Adesope, Asiabaka & Agumagu, 2007). The radio, television, Newspapers and extension workers have been identified as various sources of agricultural information to farmers. However, the emergence of the internet and more specifically the web or new media in the last few decades has brought along positive possibilities in terms of combining the two methods of communication. Haruna and Baba (2017) posited that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, information dissemination and retrieval depend largely on the ability of one to access and utilize the internet effectively through the use of various technological means. Thus, a necessary condition for improvement of all

areas of agriculture is information with adequate quality. In other words, with the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs), data and information can be effectively generated, stored, analyzed, disseminated and used to support farmers and farming communities to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability. According to Adeyemo (2017), the incorporation of information technology into farming involves the integration of diverse technologies with each capable of positively impacting the efficiency of farming activities.

Several studies have revealed the potential of the internet to all aspects of human development. More so, agricultural development is important for all national transformation and increase in food security and to achieve this, farmers, researchers and extension workers are required to be well informed. According to Jensen (2003) the right information guarantees knowledgeable, active, engaged and informed farmers who can participate wisely in the country's economic production and consequently development. Similarly, Adeyanju and Mbibi (2007) opined that farmers should be aware and knowledgeable in information communication technologies (ICTs) and utilize it effectively in obtaining their information needs. This is quite necessary because all over the world, ICTs are adequately being deployed in agricultural production.

Agricultural Research Institutes in Nigeria are facing challenges in the area of extension communication delivery due to a number of reasons among which is shortage of extension workers (Haruna & Baba, 2017). These researchers further posited that extension workers are agents for communicating new agricultural innovation to farmers, but the current extension/farmer ratio especially in Nigeria is put at 1: 350 farm families. This ratio is grossly inadequate to cater for the needs of agricultural information for farmers. As a result of the shortage of extension agents who usually facilitate the adoption of new agricultural innovations, it becomes pertinent for all stakeholders in the agricultural sector especially the farmers to effectively utilize the potential of the internet or new media to enhance their agricultural activities through agricultural information. Therefore this study intended to fill the knowledge gap by ascertaining the utilization of new media for agricultural information by farmers in the south-south region of Nigeria.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out in the south-south agro ecological zone of Nigeria. A multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select respondents. In the first stage, simple random sampling was used to select three states from the zone – Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Edo States. The second stage was the simple random

selection of two agricultural zones from each of the selected states making 6 agricultural zones. The third stage simple random sampling was used for the selection of two blocks from each agricultural zone resulting in 12 selected blocks. The fourth stage entailed simple random selection of 3 agricultural cells from each of the selected blocks making a total of 36 cells. Ten (10) farmers each were then randomly selected from the 36 cells using simple random sampling giving a sample size of 360 respondents.

The data obtained from the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on awareness of the internet as a source information for farm business**

Awareness	Akwa Ibom		Cross River		Edo		Total	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Aware	105	87.5	115	95.8	118	98.3	338	93.8
Not aware	15	12.5	5	4.12	2	1.7	22	6.1

**Source:** Field survey, 2021

Results on Table 1 show that majority (98.39%) of the respondents who are aware of the internet or new media as a source of information for agriculture are from Edo State, followed by those from Cross River State (95.8%) and the least (87.5%.) from Akwa Ibom State. In the region as a whole, most (93.8%) of the

farmers are awareness of the internet as a source of agricultural information. This result goes to corroborate the report of Adesope et al. (2007) that information technology approach is gradually spreading in Nigeria and with time it will be fully integrated into the agricultural system. Similarly, the result agrees with that of Adeyanju and Mbibi (2007) who opined that farmers should be aware of ICTs' significant role and utilize it effectively in meeting their information needs.

**Table 2: Distribution of farmers according to agricultural information for which new media is used**

S/N	Agricultural information	Akwa Ibom		Cross River		Edo		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Soil testing and sampling information	40	33.3	60	50	30	25	130	36.1
2.	Weather forecasting	45	37.5	75	62.5	50	41.7	170	47.2
3.	Market information	50	41.7	50	41.7	40	33.3	140	38.9
4.	Input price and availability	20	16.7	48	40	55	45.8	123	34.2
5.	Latest package of innovation	36	30	73	60.8	35	29.2	144	40.0
6.	Postharvest technology	42	35	68	56.7	52	43.3	162	45
7.	Facilitating access to online solutions	38	31.7	72	60	58	48.3	168	46.7
8.	General agricultural news	49	40.8	53	44.2	48	40	150	41.7
9.	Early warning and management of pests/diseases	51	42.5	65	54.2	60	50	176	48.9
10.	Information on crop/animal insurance	18	15	20	16.7	21	17.5	59	16.4
11.	Farm management and business	38	31.7	70	58.3	53	44.2	161	44.7
12.	Climate change information	41	34.2	68	56.7	48	40	157	43.6
13.	Linkage to extension agents and research	42	35	72	60	49	40.8	168	46.7
14.	Questions and answers service	15	12.5	62	51.7	40	33.3	117	32.5
15.	Information about subsidies	20	16.7	47	39.2	68	56.7	135	37.5
16.	Information about credit facilities	60	50	63	52.5	48	40	171	47.5

**Source:** Field survey, 2021 *Multiple responses recorded*

Results on Table 2 show clearly that only few proportions of farmers in the three states make use of new media to get agricultural information. Overall, 48.9% of the farmers in the study area use new media to get information on early warning and management of pests/diseases, 47.5% of them use it to receive information about credit facilities, 47.2% use it for weather forecast information, 46.7% for online information on solutions to farmer problems and another 46.7% use it to obtain information on linkage to extension agents and research. This result goes on to support the views of Suleiman, Ogakason and Faruk (2018) that the new media which has a great potential to boost agricultural production in developing countries is a relatively recent communication platform and it just gaining recognition among farmer. According to Luqman, Yaseen, Ashraf, Mehmood and Karim (2019 see Factors influencing the use of ICTs among farmers), the limited access and use of new media by farmers can also be attributed to factors such as high cost of phones, poor network coverage, illiteracy, limited competence in the use of the ICTs and problems surrounding internet connectivity. In Akwa Ibom State in particular, 50% of farmers use the new media to access information about credit facilities while 42.5% use it to get information on early warning and management of pests/diseases. In Cross River State, most (62.5%) farmers use new media to

access information on weather forecasts, while 60.8% of them use to get information on the latest package of innovation. In Edo State on the other hand, 56.7% of farmers use new media to get information about credit facilities while 50% use it to get information on early warning and management of pests/diseases. Climate information has now become important in helping farmers to make in season decisions so as to enable them adapt to adverse effects of climate change thereby reducing the negative effects on livelihoods.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Agriculture is the leading sector of most economies of developing countries; hence agricultural information is paramount to ensuring growth in the sector. The emergence of new media like the internet and web in the last few decades has brought about positive possibilities for achieving sustainable growth in the sector. This study established that most farmers in the region are aware of the advent of the new media and great potential for meeting their agricultural information needs. The study however showed that relatively few farmers in the entire region are making use it. The main agricultural information that farmers in the region get from the media are information on early warning and management of pests/diseases, information about credit facilities, weather forecast information, and online information on solutions to farmers' problems. The study therefore recommends that awareness campaigns should be organized by extension to boost

farmers' awareness on the use of these tools. Also, public private partnerships with telecommunication service providers should be initiated and encouraged so as to enhance access to new media as well as types of agricultural information developed and made available to farmers via these sources. Finally, the government should formulate policies that will encourage access and use of new media to promote its role as a key source of agricultural information.

## REFERENCES

- Adesope, O. M., Asiabaka, C. C. & Agumagu, A. C. (2007). Effects of personal characteristic of extension managers and supervisors on information technology needs in the Niger Delta Area of Nigeria. *International Journal of Education and Development using ICT*, Vol 3, No. 2:1.
- Adeyanju, A. M. & Mbibi, J. (2007). Knowledge, awareness and attitude of farming communities towards the use of ICT's for rural development" NJC, 5, 99.
- Adeyanju, A.M. and Mbibi, J. (2007). Knowledge, Awareness and Attitude of farming communities towards the use of ICT's for Rural Development. NJC. 5, 99
- Adeyemo, A. B. (2013). A e-farming framework for sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria. *Journal of Internet and Information System*, 3 (1), 1- 9.
- Haruna, A. & Baba, D. (21017). An appraisal of famers internet use for sourcing agricultural information in North –Western Nigeria. *SHS Web of Conference*, 33, DOI:10.1051/shsconf20173300051.
- Jensen, J. (2003). Journalism identity crisis: What is the news for, [www.reasononline.com](http://www.reasononline.com)
- Luqman, M., Yaseen, M., Ashraf, S., & Mehmood, M.U. (2019). Factors Influencing Use of Information and Communication Technologies among

Farmers in Rural Punjab, Pakistan. *Journal of Agricultural Extension*, 23 (2):101-112.<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jae.v23i2.11>

Mbagwu, F.C, Benson. O.V & Onuoha, C. O .(2018). Challenges of meeting information needs of rural farmers through internet-based services: experiences from developing countries in Africa This work is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

Stienon, J., Bruinsma, W. & Neuman, F. (2007). How ICT can make a difference in agricultural livelihoods. Available online at: [www.bibalex.org/Search4Dev/files/287913/118796.pdf](http://www.bibalex.org/Search4Dev/files/287913/118796.pdf)

Suleiman, M.M., Ogakason, R.O., & Faruk, N.B. (2018). Influence of Social Media in Promoting Farmers' Participation in Agriculture. *Journal of Agricultural Extension* 19(1):56-62

Verdier-Chouchane, A. & Karagueuzian, C. (2016). Moving towards a green productive agriculture in Africa: the role of ICTs. *Africa Economic Brief*, 7 (7), 1-12.