Epitome Journal of Education and Innovation
Vol. 1 (1) May, 2026
ISSN: 3141-4702

REPOSITIONING AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION MARKET INFORMATION AS A CATALYST FOR ENHANCING FARMERS' INCOME AND PRODUCTIVITY

Izuchukwu, Precious Obani[1], Odom, Clement N.[2], Enwerem V. A.[3] and Enwerem Belesochukwu[4]

[1]*University of Derby*

[2]*Department of Agricultural Economics, Management and Extension, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki*

[3]*University of Agriculture and Environment, Umuagwo – Imo State*

[4]*Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike Abia State, Nigeria.*

Abstract

This paper reviews the role of agricultural extension market information as a critical driver for improving farmers' income and productivity. While traditional extension services have focused primarily on production techniques, there is growing recognition of the need to include marketing information in extension delivery systems. The study examines the concept and components of market information, its linkage with productivity and income, and the necessity of integrating market-oriented advisory services into the extension framework. The paper concludes with strategic recommendations for institutionalizing market information services through extension networks in Nigeria.

Keywords: Agricultural extension, market information, farmers' income, productivity, marketing advisory services, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Agricultural extension has traditionally centered on disseminating production-oriented information to farmers, primarily through systems such as the Training and Visit (T&V) approach. This model aimed to increase agricultural productivity and improve rural livelihoods. However, as global agricultural markets evolve, farmers increasingly face complex decisions not only about production but also about marketing.

In the past, many farmers relied on communal norms to determine cropping patterns and marketing strategies. Today, with greater exposure to market dynamics, farmers are compelled to adopt individualized, market-oriented approaches. Consequently, there is a critical need for agricultural extension to evolve by incorporating market information services that can guide farmers on what to produce, when to sell, and where to sell.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2019) underscores this shift, noting that the traditional focus on production advice is insufficient in a liberalized market environment. Without access to reliable marketing information, the benefits of improved production practices may not translate into increased incomes. This paper thus seeks to:

- Define market and market information;
- Explore the concept of extension market information;
- Examine the relationship between market information, income, and productivity;

- Discuss the need for market information services in extension delivery;
- Recommend strategies for integrating marketing information into agricultural extension systems.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. The Concept of Market

A market is a platform—physical or virtual—where buyers and sellers exchange goods or services. It includes local markets, assembly points, online platforms, and global trade centers (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, 2001; Karen et al., 2022). According to Bellemare et al. (2016), markets also represent demand clusters, while marketing involves activities aimed at satisfying these demands profitably.

2.2. Market Information

Market information refers to data that help producers understand buyer preferences, prevailing prices, delivery specifications, and the timing of sales (Andrew, 2022). It includes both real-time and historical data that can inform production decisions and market strategies. FAO (2017) highlighted the strategic role of marketing information in optimizing farm planning and minimizing risks.

2.3. Extension Market Information

Extension market information refers to the role of extension services in facilitating access to relevant and timely market data for farmers. This function includes identifying market trends, linking farmers with buyers, and helping interpret price signals. Adeniji (2020) suggests that extension should not only transfer technology but also enhance farmers' decision-making capacity by integrating market intelligence into advisory services.

3. Linkages Between Market Information, Income, and Productivity

Empirical evidence shows a strong correlation between access to market information and improved farm productivity and income (Ana et al., 2018; Bellemare & Barrett, 2016). When farmers are informed about favorable markets and pricing structures, they are more likely to invest in quality inputs and expand their production scale.

Furthermore, poor market access and inadequate information often result in post-harvest losses and underpricing of produce, which demotivates farmers and constrains investment in commercial farming (African Agriculture, 2017). Thus, effective market information services can catalyze the transition from subsistence to market-oriented agriculture.

4. The Need for Market Information in Extension Services

The liberalization of agricultural markets in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, has led to the dismantling of government-led marketing boards. While this shift has increased competition, it has also left many smallholder farmers without reliable access to market information (FAO, 2015).

In the absence of structured marketing support, farmers must navigate complex and often exploitative markets. A notable example is from Albania, where a new market information service helped farmers access price differentials across markets, leading to better income and expanded production (FAO, 2015).

Integrating similar services into Nigeria's agricultural extension systems could reduce post-harvest losses, improve bargaining power, and incentivize productivity improvements.

5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

To reposition agricultural extension for contemporary challenges, the integration of market information services is imperative. Extension agents should not only serve as conduits for production advice but also as market facilitators. This dual function can enhance farmers' capacity to make informed decisions and achieve better economic outcomes.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Establish Market Information Units at national, state, and local government levels to collect and disseminate price and buyer data.
2. Develop a Centralized Market Information Database to capture real-time and historical pricing and buyer information across regions.
3. Enhance Capacity Building for extension agents in agricultural marketing, data interpretation, and communication strategies.
4. Integrate Market Information Modules into the agricultural extension training curriculum.
5. Encourage Public-Private Partnerships for sustainable provision of extension services.
6. Link Farmers to Structured Markets such as aggregators, contract farming arrangements, and processing companies to ensure stable income streams.
7. Promote ICT Tools for real-time market data dissemination through mobile platforms and community radio.

References

(Reformatted in APA style - recommend full review for reference consistency)

Adeniji, D. A. (2022). Agricultural Research Priority Setting: Poverty Reduction and Agricultural Productivity in Nigeria.

African Agriculture. (2017). Nigerian cassava production boom, but processing capacity lags. Retrieved from http://illafricanagriculture.blogspot.com

Ana, R., William, A. M., & Gerald, E. S. (2018). Linkages between market participation and productivity: Results from a multi-country farm household sample. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 88(3), 40–46.

Andrew, W. S. (2022). Understanding and Using Market Information. FAO, Rome.

Banmeke, T. O. A., & Olowu, T. A. (2005). Accessibility of women farmers to agricultural information in southwestern Nigeria. *South African Journal of Agricultural Extension*, 34(2), 237–246.

Bellemare, M. F., & Barrett, C. B. (2016). An ordered Tobit model of market participation: Evidence from Kenya and Ethiopia. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 88(2), 32–37.

Chris, G. (2016). Agricultural Knowledge and Information System in Hagaz, Eritrea. International and Rural Development, University of Reading.

FAO. (2015). Marketing Extension Guide 2: Understanding and Using Market Information. Rome: FAO.

FAO. (2017). Communication for Development. Retrieved from http://www.fao.org

FAO. (2019). Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services. Retrieved from http://www.fao.org

Karen, O. J. (2022). The impact of research-led agricultural productivity growth on poverty reduction in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. *International Journal of Agricultural Development Studies*, 10(2), 120–133.