



TYPE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY TOOLS USED IN DISSEMINATION OF AGRICULTURAL MARKET INFORMATION TO VEGETABLE FARMERS IN VIHIGA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

In a global view, there are critical challenges facing the vegetable farmers, including poor access to market and poor prices for their vegetables. Vegetable farmers continue to languish in poverty even in this era of information and communication technologies. The purpose of the study was to determine the type of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools used in dissemination of agricultural market information to vegetable farmers in Vihiga County, Kenya. Vihiga County was sampled using purposive sampling techniques basing on the livelihood activities and population density. Small scale farmer's households in the county were sampled by multi-stage random sampling. A survey research design was adopted for this study. Here, the natural setting in Vihiga County where vegetable farmers reside provided the required data; the sample size was 589 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires, interviews and observational checklist to investigate ICT tool used in dissemination of agricultural market information to farmers. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics by aid of Statistical Package for social sciences, (SPSS, version 20). The findings of the study reveal the availability of ICT tools such as radios, TV, mobile phones and cyber cafes in the county. The use of ICT in vegetable farming is limited. Radio was the most available tool with majority 135(49.1%) of the respondents reporting to own one. Market information for vegetable farmers remain absent on various ICT platforms. ICT was found to be in most cases statistically significant in influencing dissemination of information among small scale vegetable farming in Vihiga County to those who used i.e. P-value=0.000 at 5% level of significant when subjected to a chi-square. Department of agriculture was found to have offered extension services to farmers through radio announcements. There is need to urgently embrace the Use of other ICT platforms in disseminating agricultural market information to vegetable farmers in Vihiga County, which will enable farmers access to markets price and markets for the products, access input and weather forecast.

Keywords: ICT tools, vegetable farmers, Vihiga County, Kenya.