

INFORMATION NEEDS FOR RAPID AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

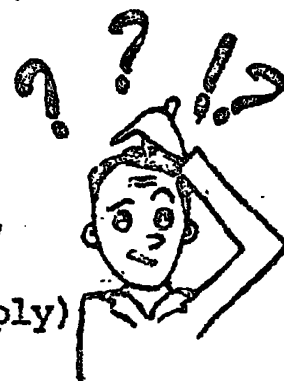


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Introduction

Farmers have to make decisions all the time. These decisions and how they are carried out influence farm output. Some of the main decisions farmers face every season are :

- * What to plant (crop - variety)
- * When to plant (timing - season)
- * Source of seed, spacing, seed rate.
- * How to plant (broadcasting, transplanting, raw seedling)
- * When to market (price trend, demand, supply)



farmers in developed countries :

A unique feature of agriculture in developing countries is the predominance of small farmers. In Sri Lanka such farmers are the vast majority. Their savings are low, and they desperately need credit to purchase essential farm inputs. A crop failure in one season causes renewed anxiety about problems in the next season. They also suffer from :



Low productivity - their average yields could be doubled or trebled with the right varieties and management practices.

Characteristics of small farmers :

The most frequently cited characteristics of small farmers are : Low level of education; Inability to make budgets and invest in the most economic way; Inadequate group expressions; Lack of knowledge on appropriate technology; Negative attitudes; Large families and lack of knowledge on family planning and rather low aspirations.

Most of these shortcomings could be resolved by an improved system of information and communication.

Scientific literature :

The value of scientific literature lies in its current application. Rapid dissemination of this material, down to the lowest level is essential for its maximum effectiveness.

- Dissemination of useful information is vital for success in any development project.

Collection, collation and dissemination of articles, news or reports containing useful information is a very important activity.



Documentation Centre :

Provision of a Documentation Centre for collecting, classifying and issuing agricultural information is essential to give scientists, research and extension workers access to foreign and local scientific literature. Relevant information published or unpublished should be made accessible.

The documentation centre should be well funded and endowed to provide timely and adequate services.

Document retrieval services enable information seekers to get the information they need.



Your contribution is tremendously useful :

For speedy agricultural development, an efficient flow of information from research to extension and finally to farmers is essential. The scientists should contribute results and information generously to agricultural documentation centre.

Information received at this centre should be re-processed to provide a current bibliography of pertinent agricultural literature. Agriculture today is characterized by rapid far-reaching changes. Specialists and technologists need to keep abreast of current developments. The key to future development lies in stimulating self-improvement. Knowledge should flow freely.

Reference - Broadbent, K.P. *Information needs for agricultural development. Some problems in South East Asian Region. Los Barnos, Philippines, AIBA.1977. (Available in Documentation Centre).*