THE ROLE OF PRIVATE VERNACULAR RADIO PROGRAMMES IN DISSEMINATING AGRICULTURAL MESSAGES TO SMALL-SCALE FARMERS IN KERICHO WEST SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Science in Agricultural Extension of Egerton University

EGERTON UNIVERSITY

FEBRUARY, 2015
DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration
I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted before for an award of a degree or diploma in this university or any other University.

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Recommendation
This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University supervisors.

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Signed............................ Date ....................................
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, who had been very supportive and understanding throughout my study period and my mother who believes that it is through education that one’s quality can be improved. Life
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ABSTRACT

Radio is an important extension tool that can be used in sharing agricultural information with smallholder farmers in rural areas inexpensively. The use of vernacular in radio broadcasts makes programmes more acceptable to rural farmers and may be used to supplement public extension. However, the role of private vernacular radio stations in disseminating agricultural messages, the approaches they use, the challenges they face and the opportunities they offer farmers in Kericho West Sub-County is not well understood or documented. The study sought to address this. A Cross-Sectional Survey research design was used to collect data from a sample of 152 rural households and three inventoried private vernacular radio stations. An interview schedule for smallholder farmers and private vernacular radio stations was used for data collection. Experts in the Department of Agricultural Education and Extension assisted in reviewing the content and face validity of the instrument. Piloting was done in Buret Sub-County to determine the reliability of the data collection instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained which was above the 0.70 threshold for acceptable reliability. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 17 was used to analyse data. The hypotheses were tested using ANOVA and Chi-square at 0.05 significance level. The study showed that small-scale farmers receiving messages from a higher number of agricultural extension service providers did not have a significantly higher level of access to the messages than those receiving messages from fewer extension service providers. The most required agricultural messages were not necessarily the most accessed. The study also showed that participation in disseminated messages influenced farmers’ access to the messages and that people in charge of agricultural extension programmes faced various challenges. Conclusions: Small-Scale farmers accessed messages from agricultural extension service providers but the number of providers did not influence the level of access. The more the messages that small-scale farmers required, the more they had access to from the vernacular radio. Participation in disseminated messages increased access to the messages. The people in charge of the agricultural programmes faced challenge in their involvement in agricultural extension. Recommendations: Extension service providers should use vernacular radio programmes to disseminate agricultural messages. The focus should be on the relevance rather than the number of messages disseminated. Since participation increased access to the disseminated messages, people in charge of the agricultural programmes should seek participation and should find ways of overcoming the challenges that they face.
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