

Need Assessment of women vegetable farmers on ecological organic agriculture (EOA) in Nigeria

OLUWATOYIN OKANLAWON MAYOWA¹, NKIRU MELUDU T²

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Abstract

The respondents had high level of knowledge (72.5%), information (54.2%), but with majority (51.7%) having unfavourable perception towards Organic Agricultural (OA) practices. There was significant relationship between the respondents' sources of information and training need ($p=0.001$) including agric-support service need ($p=0.000$). Also there was a significant relationship between farmers' knowledge and training needs ($p=0.030$) and agric-support support service needs ($p=0.006$). Significant correlation was determined between the farmers' perception and Agric-support service need ($r=0.000$). The most important need of the respondents is Agric-support service need. The constraints faced by the respondents in order of severity include lack of capital, pest infestation, and insufficient crop yield. Vegetable production method used was via seed cultivation. The result necessitates more of agric-support services and training in order to make organic vegetable production a sustainable farming practice hence improving food security globally.

Introduction

Excessive use of agrochemicals and mechanization causes soil de-conditioning, where nutrients are leached and ultimately leads to reduced water retention, making it unsuitable for agriculture. There is also significant groundwater pollution and environmental damage, which extends farther than just the farm areas. The use and widespread of toxic, synthetic pesticides often do not kill only the desired target of the application, but other species as well (Bernama, 2009). Half of all farmers in the developing world are women, and women farmers could grow 30% more food if they have access to the same resources as men. The deep concern of some women for the health of the environment is closely connected to their perception as sustainers and nurturers of life, including their desire to raise healthy children. In Nigeria, women play a dominant role in agricultural production (Meludu 2004). The role of women farmers in production of food staples like vegetables and cereal is important since the motivation for participation in agriculture is to contribute to household food security (Meludu, 2005). Women farmers play a significant role in vegetable production and marketing which therefore contributes to household food self sufficiency (Oguntade, 2009). It is therefore very essential to determine the women farmers' knowledge and perception on OA and also take into consideration their information, social and economic needs as well as constraints to right of entry to the development of OA that would inform further research and training.

Material and methods

The study area for this research is Nigeria with a case of Akinyele Local government area of Oyo state, Ibadan. It is one of the eleven local governments within Ibadan metropolis. The headquarters is at Moniya, Ibadan. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 40% of the wards in the Local Government area which gave a total of 5 wards and 20% of villages in the wards were selected because of the high concentration of women vegetable farmers in those areas. Random sampling technique was used to select 40% making a total of 120 respondents. Collection of data was done through the use of primary and secondary sources. Structured questionnaire containing items based on the objectives of this study was used to collect information from the women vegetable farmers. Interview schedule was also conducted where necessary using local dialect in order to bridge the illiteracy barrier among some respondents of the study.

Results

The Overall Need Assessment data of women vegetable farmers in the study area are presented in Table 1. It was revealed that the respondents expressed low need for Information, moderate need for training and

¹ Department of Agricultural Extension & Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State. e-mail: oklat4real@yahoo.com

² Department of Agricultural Extension & Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State. E-mail: nkiru_m@yahoo.com

high need for Agric support service on organic agriculture in the study which confirms that the most expressed need by the farmers in order of priority include Agric-support services, Training and Information need respectively.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to overall Needs Assessment

Needs Category	Extent of Need	
	High Freq %	Low Freq %
Information	51 (42.5)	69 (57.5)
Training	59 (49.2)	61 (50.8)
Agric-support services	71 (59.2)	49 (40.8)

Source: Field survey data 2013. * percentages in parentheses

The overall information, knowledge and perception category of respondents are presented in table 2 and it revealed that the respondents have high level of information and knowledge about organic agriculture but majority of them had unfavourable perception towards organic agricultural practices.

Table 2: Overall Information, knowledge & Perception category

Level of information	Freq	%
High	65	54.2
Low	55	45.8
Level of Knowledge*		
High	87	72.5
Low	33	27.5
Level of Perception*		
Favourable	58	48.3
Unfavourable	62	51.7

* indicates multiple responses

Discussion

The most commonly cultivated vegetables by the respondents includes amaranth, celosia, corchorus and bitter leaf and the most adopted source of information by the respondents on organic agriculture is family and friends (54.2%) followed by radio and extension agents (25.8%) respectively, the result indicated that the respondents' sources of information was significant to their training need ($p=0.001$) and agric-support service need ($p=0.000$). Majority of the respondents have a high level of information on organic agriculture (54.2%) with a high knowledge of 72.5% showing therefore that the farmers' knowledge level is significant to their training ($p=0.030$) and agric-support support service needs ($p=0.006$), a higher percentage having an unfavourable perception to organic agriculture (51.7%). The constraints faced by the farmers in order of severity include lack of capital, pest and disease infestation, difficult marketing of organic products. The most important need of the respondents is the Agric-support service need.

Suggestions to tackle with the future challenges

Organic agricultural inputs can be made available for farmers through the farmer's they belong for easy accessibility so as to increase their vegetable production. Accessibility to marketing units for collection and sales of organic products, transportation facilities to be able to transfer vegetable products from farm without losing its nutritional as well as economical value is also a necessity. Adequate irrigation, storage and processing facilities will also help farmers to be able to preserve their vegetable products from deteriorating before getting to the end users.

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