

ABSTRACT

The use of Information Communication Technology by farmers to access agricultural information has potential to improve agricultural productivity by enhancing the farmers' information base for decision making. There is limited information on the current uptake of ICT by farmers in rural Locations thus making it difficult for stakeholders to determine the types of interventions required to improve the farmers' information base. The purpose of this study was to establish the extent which Information Communication Technology is used by farmers to access information for making agricultural decisions in Kajulu location of Kisumu County. The main objective of the study was to evaluate the use of ICT in accessing information for making agricultural decisions in Kajulu location of Kisumu County Kenya. The specific objectives were to establish the current level of ICT knowledge amongst farmers in Kajulu location, to establish the current ways through which farmers in Kajulu location access information for making agricultural decisions and to establish the challenges of using ICT to access information for making agricultural decisions. Stratified sampling was used to obtain a sample of 384 from a population of 9451 households. The cross section research design was used because the study was describing the current activities in Kajulu. Primary data was collected using household questionnaires and analyzed using frequencies and percentages. According to the findings, the highest percentage of those who had ICT knowledge were women at 55%. The age bracket 25-32 years, was the most knowledgeable (40%) about Information Communication Technology while the age group 45-57years was the least knowledgeable (7%). Those people who were educated past secondary level understood Information Communication Technology better and they represented 93% cumulatively. Non specified sources of information termed as (other) in the study was the most used by farmers to access information at 40%-this was non ICT related. ICT related channels were only used at 19%. The most preferred information was on agricultural inputs which was at 39%. Mixed farming was practiced by 47% of the respondents, subsistence farming by 30% and animal farming was 18% .69% of the respondents had experienced a challenge when using ICT. Lack of ICT skills was the most common challenge experienced at 44%. The study concludes that the level of ICT usage in accessing information is low because the people who make agricultural decisions have limited knowledge. The study also concludes that currently, farmers mostly use non ICT means to access information. Farmers also experience challenges in terms of lack of skills and network, thus making it hard for them to use ICT. The study subsequently recommends that both the county and central governments come up with digital training centers for farmers to be trained on how to use ICT to access information. The government should also support initiatives for farmers to own computers through price controls of the same and getting into agreement with financial institutions to facilitate farmers in owning ICT equipment. The county government of Kisumu should come up with farmers' digital information centers with databases on all farming activities where farmers can use queries to retrieve tailored information, this will motivate farmers to use ICT to access the digital information. The study findings will help the policy makers in designing programs to improve farming decisions.