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THE EVALUATION OF EXTENSION

An Approach for a Research Project in Embu District, Kenya

by

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1. INTRODUCTION:- Although millions of shillings have been spent on Agricultural Extension in East Africa, very little has been spent on evaluating the work done. The Governments concerned have virtually no idea of whether the methods being used are producing results or whether better methods are available. The proposed research will attempt to analyse the extension work being done in one district of Kenya. By means of several small surveys attempts will then be made to evaluate the effectiveness of the work.

2. Reasons for the Selection of Embu District.

The prime initial reason for selecting Embu for this work is that the author of this paper is at present Principal of the Embu Agricultural Training Centre. However there are several other good reasons for selecting Embu, namely:-

(a) The District is close to the Agricultural Training Centre where up to 150 students will be available for work as enumerators.

(b) The process of training and using students for this work will in itself be valuable experience for the students who are later to be employed as Technical Assistants.

(c) Embu District has a wide range of altitudes (6,000 - 2,000 ft.) and so covers several ecological zones with different farming patterns.

(d) Embu is a district which has developed later than other districts in Central Kenya. Thus although the whole of Embu Division is consolidated and has areas which have developed very little over the past 50 years.

(e) The District provides scope for comparing extension approaches by other agencies than the Department of Agriculture. (e.g. B.A.T. Ltd., Co-operative Societies, Development Authorities and Marketing Boards)

3. The Structure of Extension:-

The attached diagram shows the lines of responsibility for extension workers in the District. The structure is somewhat complex and puts a tremendous burden on the District Agricultural Officer. The farmer may also be confused by the multitude of advisers. It will be noted also that completely un-qualified Agric. Dept. staff; the Assistant Agricultural Instructors, have more contact with farmers than those with some training (T.A's & A.A.O's) ..

The approximate numbers in each post are:-

A.A.I's (Assistant Agricultural - unqualified Instructors)	50
T.A's (Technical Assistant - Embu Certificate)	22
A.A.O's (Assistant Agric. Officers - Diploma level)	3
Cotton Officer - Diploma level (employed by Cotton and Lint Marketing Board)	1
Tea Officer (Diploma level - employed by Kenya Tea Devel. Authority)	1
Agricultural Officer (Graduate)	1

4.Extension Methods used:-

(a) Visits to individual farmers.
(b) Organisation of 4 - K Clubs.
(c) Baraza's to inform farmers about loans, new crops, etc.
(d) Recruitment for and follow up of Farmers Training Centre Courses.
(e) Demonstrations to groups of farmers.
(f) Field Days (e.g. at Embu A.T.C.).

5.Non-Extension duties of Technical Assistants:-

(a) Supplies to farmers: a considerable time is spent in distributing seed, fertilizers and insecticides to farmers.
(b) Farm layouts: a special team is employed for this but the extension worker is also involved when they visit his location.
(c) Checking and recording: milk records of owners of grade cattle, farmers with wattle ready for cutting, etc.
(d) Other duties: a considerable amount of time appears to be spent in writing reports, supervising, travelling and waiting to meet the A.A.O. or D.A.O.

6.Possible approaches to evaluation:-

(a) Comparison of changes in an area with an extension service with an area with no extension service.
(b) A before and after study (e.g. The Borgo A' Mozzeno experiment in Italy).
(c) Evaluation of individual extension methods by a before and after study
(d) Study of practice adoption for certain crops or farm enterprises.
(e) A case study of individual farms or farmers.

7.Proposed evaluation techniques:-

6(a) and 6(b) above have been rejected. The first would be very difficult because of the problem of finding 2 areas which were entirely similar in all other respects than extension. The second would require a long period of research and is beyond the scope of a part-time project. Thus it is proposed to use all the 3 remaining approaches. The studies whichit is at present hoped to carry out are:-

Title	Purpose	Sample
Study of activities of Extension Personnel	To discover main extension methods used, time spent on other duties, etc.	All Technical Assistants initially
Recommendation Study - Maize	To find what individual staff are recommending - for comparison with standard recommendations.	All Technical Assistants initially.
Random practice adoption Study - Maize	Determine which of above practices have been adopted (e.g. spacing, weeding, fertilizer, insect control, seed used, etc.)	Random Sample

Title	Purpose	Sample
Practice adoption Study of innovators	To determine whether innovators have a greater tendency to adopt recommended practices	Possibly a sample of Tea Growers
Extension method evaluation	To determine where and/or when adopted practices have been learnt. Where practices have not been adopted to determine why they were not adopted.	Possibly a sample of Tea Growers.

8. Other possible studies and techniques:-

(a) A time chart of the main extension emphasises over the past 10 - 20 years.

(b) A follow up study of a Farmers Training Centre course to determine:-

i. What was learnt

ii. What was adopted.

(c) A follow up study as above of a womens course to determine whether husband or wife makes the final decision on practice adoption for different practices.

(d) A follow up study of 4 K Clubs and members projects.

(e) Case studies of individual farms.