

Research Article

Information hungers of the rice growers

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Article Chronicle :

Received :
23.08.2011;

Revised :
20.01.2012

Accepted :
22.02.2012

SUMMARY : The present investigation was confined to Anand district of Gujarat state. The information need of the 100 rice growers was measure using three point continuums. Major area of information needs as expressed by the rice growers in descending order of rank were plant protection measures, marketing, schedule of water supply by canal, fertilizer management, water management, preparation of seedlings, variety, land preparation and sowing, supportive facts, harvesting and post harvesting technology and weed management. It was observed from the same table that majority of the rice growers have expressed their information needs about identification, nature of damage and control measures for insects/pests as well as diseases of rice crop; price of insecticides/pesticides; integrated pest management and method of preparing solutions of insecticides /pesticides. They articulated high need for information on market price followed by quality parameters that affects price and time of market inflow. It can be seen that the rice growers expressed their needs for information about subsidies, insurance and government policies related to rice cultivation.

How to cite this article : Nikulsinh M. Chauhan (2012). Information hungers of the rice growers. *Agric. Update*, 7(1&2):72-75.

Key Words :

Rice growers,
Information hungers,
Harvest Technology,
Post-harvest
technology

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Rice is predominantly grown in Kheda district as it is the staple food crop of this region. The studies conducted in past in this region regarding rice crop production technology indicate that there is a wide gap exist between the knowhow already attained and their application in the fields. Thus, there is a wide scope for increasing production of rice per unit area. In order to increase the level of adoption, farmer must be made aware of the improved technologies.

Acquisition of information has always been regarded as a factor playing an important role in molding human behaviour leading to decision for adopting of innovation. Mass dissemination of information may play an important role in increasing the adoption of technology. The preparation of good content of information of rice farming is possible based on the real information needs of the farmers. The content based on actual needs of the users will create interest among them to apply it in practice (Mehta, 2003). With a view to supporting larger group of rice growers with

agricultural information in future, the present study was carried out with specific objective to ascertain the information needs of the rice growers. The golden era of an information age the high-tech rice production and marketing technologies should be reached to the final end users i.e. farmers. Hence, this attempt was made to study the information needs of the rice growers to increase rice production and income, too.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The present investigation was confined to Anand district of Gujarat state. Anand district comprises of eight talukas. Khambhat is the major rice growing taluka of the district. This taluka was selected purposively because area under rice cultivation is highest among all the eight talukas of district. Five villages viz., Gudel, Galiyana, Naviakhol, Rohini, and Tamsa were selected randomly from among the list of the major rice growing villages of Khambhat taluka. The lists of rice growers were obtained for each of the selected villages from the gram panchayat office. Twenty

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respondents from each of the selected villages were randomly selected. Thus, the study was confined to 100 respondents. The information need of the farmer was measure using three point continuum. The mean score was obtained by the total number of score divided by total number of respondents.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the present investigation has been discussed below:

Information hungers of the rice growers:

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that major area of information needs expressed by the rice growers in descending order of rank were plant protection measures, marketing, schedule of water supply by canal, fertilizer management, water management, preparation of seedlings, variety, land preparation and sowing, supportive facts, harvesting and post harvesting technology and weed management. The results are in conformity with the findings of Patel (2004). It means that the rice growers gave highest emphasis on market related information, as this information can help them to a great extent to convert their produce in more money. They were also conscious about information on schedule of water to be supplied by canal as well as plant protection measures. The data also reflect that the rice growers have become more cautious about fertilizer management due to new trend of organic rice framing. Prakash and Singh (2010) also reported the same.

Table 1: The respondents according to their overall information needs for rice cultivation (n = 100)

Sr. No.	Areas of information	Mean score	Rank
1.	Variety	1.31	V
2.	Schedule of water supply by canal	1.67	II
3.	Preparation of seedlings	1.36	IV
4.	Land preparation and sowing	1.22	VII
5.	Fertilizer management	1.67	II
6.	Weed management	0.71	XI
7.	Irrigation management	1.42	III
8.	Plant protection measures	1.89	I
9.	Harvesting and post harvesting technology	0.88	IX
10.	Marketing	1.89	I
11.	Supportive facts	1.21	VIII

Operation wise Information hungers of the rice growers:

An attempt was made to ascertain operation wise information needs of the rice growers. The data in this regard are presented in Table 2.

Looking to the variety, majority of the farmers have expressed their needs for information about sources of seeds,

suitable high yielding variety for the area and rate of seeds. The reason might be that the farmers are convinced to sow good variety but the availability of seed of suitable variety and its' rate are always a dilemma for them. Schedule of water to be supplied by canal, in the area of the study farmers are facing big dilemma of uncertain availability of the irrigation water through canal, thus they are facing problem of crop failure due to lack of expected irrigation water as and when required in required quantity. The information about water to be supplied in canal before sowing time and advance information about time and date of supply of water in canal for complete crop period were the expected information needs of the rice growers. It is observed that due to lack of technical know-how farmers were not in position to prepare seedlings to transplant rice crop and faced problem in getting it as and when required. Some time due to unavailability of needed varieties' seedlings they grow was unwanted variety of rice. Regarding preparation of seedlings, the data presented in Table 2 give us an idea that how to select site for raising seedlings, method of preparing bed for nursery, plant protection in nursery management, nutrient management in nursery, irrigation management in nursery and proper age to select seedlings for transplanting were the major information realized by the rice growers. In case of land preparation and sowing, the probable reason for high need for soil treatment related information might be due to the fact that the area encompasses high potentiality of irrigation mainly with canal. This resulted in accumulation of salts on the surface of soil, which forces the farmers to learn more about soil reclamation. Regarding fertilizer management, the fertilizer management is indispensable for higher yields. The responses of the rice growers reveal that majority of them shown their interest of information on price of fertilizers, stock of fertilizers, place of availability of fertilizers, name of highly advantageous chemical fertilizers for rice, method and time of fertilizer application, nutrient requirements of plant, calculating the doze of chemical fertilizer, deficiency symptoms of major plant nutrients, bio-fertilizers, making organic manures. This means that the respondents know the importance of this input. It may help them in reducing the total cost of cultivation. Weed management is important non-monitoring inputs. Some of the least important needs expressed were chemical weed control, price of weedicides, place of availability of weedicides, trade name of weedicides, stock of weedicides and hand weeding. The rice growers expressed that schedule for irrigation, critical stages of irrigation, how to save crop during shortage of water, fertilizer management during irrigation and method of irrigation were key areas of their need regarding irrigation management in rice crop. They realized that only by increasing the water use efficiency with the help of suitable method and time of irrigation, they can fetch good production of rice crop. That's why the rice growers had more in getting information related

Table 2: Information needs of paddy growers (n=100)

Sr. No.	Areas of information needs	Mean score	Rank
Variety of paddy			
1.	Source of seeds	1.63	I
2.	Suitable high yielding variety for the area	1.27	II
3.	Rate of seeds	1.12	III
4.	Characteristics of high yielding variety	0.67	IV
Schedule of water to be supplied by canal			
1.	Water to be supplied in channel before sowing time	1.82	I
2.	Time and date of supply of water in canal for complete crop period	1.27	II
Preparation of seedlings of rice			
1.	How to select site for raising seedlings	1.31	I
2.	Method of preparing bed for nursery	1.28	II
3.	Plant protection in nursery management	1.22	III
4.	Nutrient management in nursery	1.14	IV
5.	Proper age to select seedlings for transplanting	1.06	V
Sowing			
1.	Seed rate	1.56	I
2.	Sowing time	1.34	II
3.	Depth of sowing	1.31	III
4.	Method of sowing	1.21	IV
5.	Spacing	1.11	V
6.	Seed treatment inputs	0.93	VI
Fertilizer management			
1.	Price of fertilizers	1.82	I
2.	Method and time of fertilizer application	1.71	II
3.	Nutrient requirements of plant	1.41	III
4.	Calculating the doze of chemical fertilizer	1.40	IV
5.	Deficiency symptoms of major plant nutrients	1.32	V
6.	Bio-fertilizers	0.98	VI
Weed control			
1.	Chemical weed control	0.93	I
2.	Price of weedicides	0.81	II
3.	Place of availability of weedicides	0.72	III
4.	Trade name of weedicides	0.61	IV
5.	Hand weeding	0.21	V
Irrigation management			
1.	Schedule for irrigation	1.78	I
2.	Critical stages of irrigation	1.77	II
3.	How to save crop during shortage of water	1.66	III
4.	Fertilizer management during irrigation	1.21	IV
5.	Method of irrigation	0.41	V

Contd..... Table 2

Table 2.....Contd

Plant protection measures			
1.	Identification, nature of damage and control measures for insects/pests of rice	1.73	I
2.	Identification, nature of damage and control measures for diseases of rice	1.71	II
3.	Price of insecticides and pesticides	1.53	III
4.	Integrated pest management in rice	1.22	IV
5.	Method of preparing solution of pesticides	1.05	V
Harvest and post harvest technology			
1.	Proper time of harvest	1.21	I
2.	How to store rice production	1.09	II
3.	Care after harvesting at farm level	0.92	III
Marketing			
1.	Market price	1.79	I
2.	Quality parameters that affects price	1.72	II
3.	Time of market inflow	1.67	III
4.	Place of marketing	1.52	IV
5.	Value addition	0.51	VII
Supportive facts			
1.	Subsidies for rice cultivation	1.33	I
2.	Insurance of rice crop	1.16	II
3.	Government policies related to rice crop	1.04	III
4.	Credit/loan facilities for rice cultivation	0.89	IV

to irrigation. It was observed from the same table that majority of the rice growers have expressed their information needs about identification, nature of damage and control measures for insects/pests as well as diseases of rice crop; price of insecticides/pesticides; integrated pest management and method of preparing solutions of insecticides /pesticides. The probable reason for information needs about protection measures might be that this crop faces major problems in this regard and if plant protection is not done correctly, that may decrease production and increase the cost of cultivation. Manjunath *et al.* (2011) reported the same.

Harvest and post harvest technology:

The data also show that proper time of harvest, ideal thrasher for thrashings rice, how to store rice production, care after harvesting at farm level and care during harvesting were major information needs of rice growers.

Market:

The rice growers expressed high information need for almost all the areas of market information. They articulated high need for information on market price followed by quality parameters that affects price and time of market inflow. The fluctuation in price of rice is very common mainly due to time

of inflow, quality of rice and its' demand. Further, considerable variations between market yards are also observed. These leads rice growers to confirm high interest in the information regarding market so as to get maximum returns of their produces.

Supportive facts:

It can be seen that the rice growers expressed their needs for information about subsidies, insurance and government policies related to rice cultivation. The high cost of cultivation might have led the respondents to get information about subsidies. Similarly, high risk associated with the crop may force them to acquire information of insurance. The market price of rice depends greatly on government policies, which lead the farmers to know more about government policies including support price related to rice crop, declared from time to time.

Implications:

It can be concluded that close collaboration with the extension worker should be thought of in order to impart training to the rice growers about improved technologies especially in the areas as expressed by them. Further, orientation of the training programme on how to make best

use of the various sources of information may be organized which enables the rice growers to seek information. The high level , recent, updated and immediate availability of the information regarding rice growing and marketing as desired by farmers is need of the time for profitable rice cultivation in the country.

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