

A B S T R A C T**THE ADOPTION PROCESS OF BIODIGESTERS FOR LIVESTOCK
FARMERS IN JAMAICA**

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This study seeks to identify those factors which affect the adoption of biodigesters by livestock farmers in Jamaica. It utilises a holistic approach which explores those factors beyond the control of the individual which impinge on the process.

The study proposes a communication paradigm which treats adoption as a continuous dependent variable. This variable is expressed at three levels. The lowest recognises the acceptance of the cultural component of the technology, the intermediate the active pursuit of innovation ownership and the highest, innovation ownership. In so doing, adoption is treated as a highly complex variable which is affected by the delivery system, the characteristics of the innovation, as well as macro-economic factors which affect the profitability of the livestock operation of the farmer.

Three groups of farmers were used in this study. These were pig farmers who had made no institutional contact for innovation ownership, farmers who had made institutional contact towards innovation ownership and farmers who owned biodigesters. Different questionnaires were used for nonowners and owners of innovations.

It was found that innovation ownership was the result of the positive interaction among individual-related factors, such as location, farming situation and resources; technological factors such as relative advantage and level of adaptation to needs of livestock farmers; community and institutional related factors, such as level of compatibility of communication techniques with the level of understanding and education of the receiving farming community. Also, it was concluded that there was a low level of awareness about the technology in those areas furthest removed from Kingston. It has identified the need to improve the level of institutional cooperation and integration towards improved information dissemination and the provision of facilitatory mechanisms to promote ownership.