

ABSTRACT

The Adoption of Recommended Practices by Cocoa Farmers: The Ghana Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme

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The study aimed at determining current levels of adoption of 12 selected recommended practices on cocoa production and the factors influencing them. The relationship between the dependent variable of overall adoption of the recommended practices and the independent variables of personal and background characteristics, situational and farm related factors, economic and communicational factors were investigated.

Constraints to effective extension work and other factors that would enhance or militate against the adoption of the practices and the Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme were identified.

Data and information were collected from 180 farmers, 63 extension agents and 15 non-cocoa farmers through interviews and questionnaire survey.

The study revealed that eight of the 12 practices including those considered as critically important for short term increases in cocoa production (eg. weed control, pest control, recommended cocoa varieties, etc.) were adopted by less than one third of the respondents. However, two practices (cultural control method of black-pod disease and mid-crop harvesting) had a high respondent adoption (over 67% adoption). Two other practices (swollen shoot disease and mistletoe control) had a medium respondent adoption (34-66% adoption).

Factors contributing to non-adoption, low and partial adoption included unattractive producer prices, lack of knowledge of the practices, and lack of conviction of the merits of some of the recommended practices. Complexity of some practices, inadequate and erratic supply of some farm inputs, prohibitive costs of labour, sprayers and insecticides were also major constraints in adoption of the recommended practices. Inadequate support from the extension system was also found to contribute to the low adoption of recommended practices.

Though economic factors were very important in influencing adoption, situational and farm related variables were the most important group of variables that influenced overall adoption of the recommended practices. Of communicational factors, persons from whom information was

sought and frequency of contacts with the extension agents were significant influencers of adoption but the Chief Cocoa Farmer was not important as a channel for communication of innovation. With respect to personal variables, gender was the most important. Female farmers tended to be lower adopters of the recommended practices especially those which are more physically strenuous.

In connection with the extension agents, the study also revealed that a large work load, inadequate supervision, lack of transportation, inadequate programme planning and poor incentives for work were factors impeding effective extension work and limiting the success of the Rehabilitation Programme.

Significant among the recommendations made were: provision of attractive producer price and incentives for both farmers and extension agents, improvement in the supply of farm inputs, solutions to the labour problem, improving transportation for extension agents, the creation of a radio programme on cocoa for farmers, and the setting up of an extension monitoring, research and evaluation unit within the Cocoa Services Division.