



Information management in agriculture: a study of information use and flow within the Japanese agricultural extension services

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The level of awareness on food safety and quality among consumers has shown a sudden and marked increase in recent times. This indicates a higher need for clean, safe and healthy food production by the agricultural sector which consequently requires farmers to be involved in intensive decision-makings. The agricultural extension, on the other hand has been a strong tradition in agriculture which play predominantly advisory roles within the agricultural community. Formally the extension act as an intermediary which normally provide information support to farmers in attempts to facilitate decision-makings by the latter. It helps to address information needs of farmers by communicating the information produced by research laboratories, research and experiment stations, government agencies as well as the industry to farmers. Information, therefore, is at the core of the extension services and effective information management within this service is imperative to ensure that efficient, relevant and timely information is delivered to the farmers. The present study is carried out to discover the state of the Japanese agricultural extension services. It would be helpful to understand the flow of agricultural information and how the extension advisors use the information resources. The results might also provide useful insights which could explain the success and sustainability of the Japanese agricultural sector.

Key Words: information use, information flow, agricultural information, agricultural extension, information management, decision making, agriculture, information intermediary