

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jae.v17i1.17>

## Meeting the Needs of Small Scale Farmers in Nigeria: The Commodity Price Broadcast Approach

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### Abstract

*Commodity price is a systematic process of disposing farm produce to give farmers a good remuneration for products. Giwa market from North West Zone was purposively chosen. 120 farmers were randomly selected from market surrounding villages. Information was obtained by the use of structured questionnaires. Data were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics which were used to describe the mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) distribution of the prices per commodity; bar charts and tables were used to present the result of the study. Farmers derived more information on market prices of agricultural produce and facilitated decision on what, how, when, and where to market their produce. This would aid farmers to have better earnings. The recommendations included: more market information from other location should be sought and intervention should be intensified to create more awareness on the importance of commodity price for agricultural and national development.*

**Keywords:** *Small scale farmers, farmers' needs, commodity price broadcast.*

### Introduction

Commodity price as a marketing information system is a systematic process of disposing farm produce to give farmers good remuneration for the product. It plays an important role in the agro-industrialization and food supply value chain and serves as one of the very strategic information needs of vast majority of farmers in Nigeria. It involves a range of strategies and techniques to raise awareness of farm commodity and get more people to purchase the produce or services.

This is in line with the current Federal Government Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) as a new beginning of a revolution for the agricultural sector to improve the livelihood of Nigerians (Arokoyo, 2012). According to Ozowa (1995) and Leroux et al. (2001) market information are farmers needs that enabled them to make rational and relevant decisions whose services have the function of collecting and processing market data systematically and continuously thereby making it available to all relevant stakeholders. It provides farmers with information on how, when, what, and where about of agricultural commodities in order to meet clients needs. This corroborates the position of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 2005) which asserts that, market information enables farmers to make an informed decisions about what to grow how, to grow, and as well as which markets produce should be sent for consumers to buy for onward utilization.

There are a number of factors which influence prices such as supply and demand, location, time of the year, quality of the product, and available market information (Sernow, 2004; NAERLS, 2012). Good marketing activities would enhance farmers' opportunity of gaining more advantages over the sale of their produce as well as providing adequate protection for small holder farmers from exploitation from middlemen who patronises small scale farmers at the farm gate.

### **The Programme (ACPB)**

The commodity market price broadcast (ACPB) sponsored by the National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (A.B.U) is one of the programme aimed at providing a grassroots extension delivery to Nigerian farmers as a strategy of satisfying farmers need via marketing information.

The programme started with a pilot project in 2008 covering six (6) Agroecological zones based on Geo-political Zones of Nigeria viz: North west (Giwa market, Kaduna State), North East (Monday market, Borno State), North Central (Bida market, Niger state), south west (Bodija market, Oyo State), and South East (Umuahia market, Abia State). The effort is in line with satisfying one of its mandates of providing market information to the diverse target users among which are the small scale farmers, producers, marchants, commodity agents, processors, industrialists, and consumers alike. Thirteen selected agricultural commodities identified were Maize, Cowpea, Soybean, Groundnut, Rice, Sorghum, Gari, Tomatoes, Egusi, Dry Fish, Eggs, Ginger, and Palm oil through the use of standard and familiar measures. In line with this, the project comprises of:-

- a) Commodity price collection from rural market by enumerators.
- b) Collation, compilation, processing of National table of commodity market prices and.
- c) Weekly broadcasting of the programme across the country. (NAERLS, 2012)

The information from these markets are tabulated capturing price variation across the country and are aired on a weekly basis on FRCN and some states radio stations in English and native language of where the market is located. The programmer is broadcasted for 15 minutes on Monday from 9:30am – 9:45am in Hausa and Tuesday from 9:45am – 10am in English as the case with North West Zone listeners. Therefore, the study investigated perceived effectiveness and benefits derivable from the agricultural commodity market price broadcast among farmers in Giwa Local Government Area. Specifically, the study sought to:

- assess farmers perception on commodity market price broadcast;
- determine the farmers' benefit, derivable from the programme; and
- identify problems associated with commodity market price programme.

### **Methodology**

#### **Sample/Sampling Procedure**

Giwa market from North West Zone was purposively selected due to proximity to NAERLS Headquarter for easily collation, monitoring and evaluation and also minimize expenses attached to project. One Hundred and twenty farmers were randomly selected from Shika (30), Giwa (20), Marabar Guga (20), Mahuta (10),

Gangara (10), Tashar Zomo (10), and Yakawada (10). Information obtained were on farmers socio-economic characteristic, their perception on commodity price broadcast, benefit derivable from the programme as well as problems associated with the programme in the North-West Zone of Nigeria.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and percentages and illustrated with bar charts.

### **Result and Discussion**

The socio-economic parameters considered in the study include: age, sex, education, house hold size, farm size and marketing experience.

Respondent's age ranged between 20-69 years, with an average of 35years. (Table 1) However majority (45.9%) fell within age bracket of 40-49 years, 23.3% within 50-59 years, 16.7% between 60-69 and only 14.1% were between the range of 30-39 years. The Table further indicates that majority were male (82.5%). Quite a majority of the farmers were educated with about 33.3% having had primary education, 16.7% had secondary level, while 25.0% were each had tertiary institutions and Islamic education. The respondents cropped an average of 6ha per farmer with an average house hold sizes of 12.5 people per family. On the average, respondents had marketing experiences of about 22 years, with 35.0% ranging between 10-19 years, and 29.2% falling within 20-29 years while about 23.3% within 30-39 years and only 12.5% had 5-9 years respectively.

Middle age implies active, hence may influence resource allocation, reasoning and managerial abilities (Jabil, 2009; Haruna, 2002), while sex and house hold size were economic indicators of labour availability for the production of enough with an excess for marketing (Jabil, 2009). On the other hand, education and marketing experiences were expected to have direct positive relationship with proficiency, and hence helps farmers to observe critically the market price trends for participation in policy matters and generally in developmental responsibilities (Jabil, 2009; Haruna, 2002), while also the average farm size was an indicator of small nature of farm operations.

Table I

**Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents**

| Variable                             | Frequency | Percentage (n=120) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| <b>Age (Years)</b>                   |           |                    |
| 20-29                                |           |                    |
| 30-39                                | 17        | 14.1               |
| 40-49                                | 55        | 45.9               |
| 50-59                                | 28        | 23.3               |
| 60-69                                | 20        | 16.7               |
| <b>Sex</b>                           |           |                    |
| Male                                 | 99        | 82.5               |
| Female                               | 21        | 17.5               |
| <b>Educational qualifications</b>    |           |                    |
| Primary                              | 40        | 33.3               |
| Secondary                            | 20        | 16.7               |
| Tertiary                             | 30        | 25.0               |
| Islamic education                    | 30        | 25.0               |
| <b>Marketing experiences (years)</b> |           |                    |
| 5-9                                  | 15        | 12.5               |
| 10-19 Average = 22 years             | 42        | 35.0               |
| 20-29                                | 35        | 29.2               |
| 30-39                                | 28        | 23.3               |
| <b>Farm size (ha) plots</b>          |           |                    |
| 2                                    | 20        | 16.7               |
| 4                                    | 40        | 33.3               |
| 6 Average = 6ha/person               | 20        | 16.7               |
| 8                                    | 30        | 25.6               |
| 10                                   | 10        | 8.3                |

**Source:** Field Survey, 2013

**Farmers Perception on Commodity Price Broadcast**

Table 2 shows farmers perception of the commodity price broadcast, ranging from awareness, interest, sources of information, reason for choosing a market, appropriateness/adequacy of time and frequency of the programme as well as the relevance of the programme in agricultural development.

The result of the survey revealed that 75.7% were aware of the programme and majority (73.3%) were interested. Also 75.0% reported that, radio serve as a main source of market information eventhough about 25.0% revealed to have gotten market information through extension agents. Farmers advanced reasons for choosing Giwa market as closeness, attractive prices, potential buyers with 46.7%, 32.5% and 20.8% respectively. Both the broadcasting timing and programme

frequency were reported inadequate, as majority (84.0%) were agitating for increase in timing to 30 minutes, while about 50.9% opined to the fact that the programme should be aired twice per week for effective dissemination of market information. All the respondent reported that, the price broadcast radio programme is relevant and is in line with ATA value chain for all the zonal offices on both state and national broadcasting stations; for transformation of Nigeria through agriculture.

The trend observed in these result were attributed to broadcast of the programme in official and native language of the area (English and Hausa) eventhough the broadcasting hour in the morning is not suitable for most of the farmers in the region. This negates the findings of Olajide et. al (2012) who showed that the programme is aired in the evening at Oyo which remains a leisure time for most farmers in the area.

The possible explanation on inadequate broadcasting timing and frequency may be attributed to poor sponsorship as well as the exorbitant prices paid for airing the programme per week (~~N~~54,000.00) for only a programme in English and Hausa which translate to ~~N~~702,000.00 per quarter. That seems to be a major challenge with the Institute, eventhough, the programme is gaining wider acceptance nationwide through promoting economic development.

**Table 2**

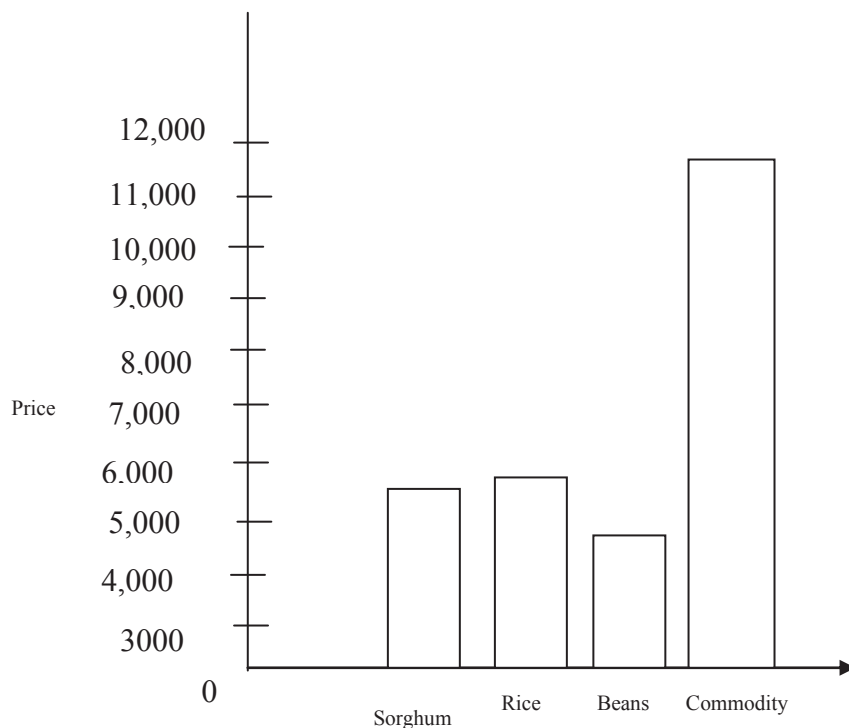
**Respondents perception on the commodity price programme.**

| <b>Remark<br/>(positive/negative)</b> | <b>Perception<br/>statement</b>        | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (n=120)</b> |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1+                                    | Awareness of the programme             | 92               | 76.7                      |
| 2+                                    | interest in the programme              | 88               | 73.3                      |
| 3+                                    | Sources of information                 |                  |                           |
|                                       | Radio                                  | 90               | 75.0                      |
| 4-                                    | Extension Agents                       | 30               | 25.0                      |
|                                       | Reason for choosing Giwa Market        |                  |                           |
|                                       | Closeness                              | 56               | 46.7                      |
|                                       | Attractive prices                      | 39               | 32.5                      |
| 5-                                    | Potential buyers                       | 25               | 20.8                      |
|                                       | The broadcasting timing is appropriate |                  |                           |
|                                       | Suggest an appropriate timing          |                  |                           |
|                                       | 60 minutes                             | 14               | 11.7                      |
| 6+                                    | 30 "                                   | 84               | 70.0                      |
|                                       | 15 "                                   | 22               | 18.3                      |
|                                       | The programme frequency is adequate    |                  |                           |
|                                       | Suggest No. of appropriate frequency   |                  |                           |
|                                       | 2 times                                | 61               | 50.9                      |
| 6+                                    | 3 "                                    | 42               | 35.0                      |
|                                       | 4 "                                    | 10               | 8.3                       |
|                                       | 5 "                                    | 7                | 5.8                       |
|                                       | Relevancy of the programme             |                  |                           |

**Source:** Field survey, 2013

**Average price of some selected commodity in North West Zone**

Information on the bar charts indicated average prices of some major selected Commodity covered by NWZ markets.



**Figure 1: Average price of some selected Commodity (NWZ)**

Source: NAERLS 2012

The chart, presented an average prices of dominant Commodity in the zone (Maize, Sorghum, Rice and Beans) across a Cropping Season of January, 2012 – December, 2012.

### **Respondents perceived benefit on the Commodity Price Broadcast (ACPB)**

Table 3 result indicated that, 32.5% of the respondents claimed to have benefitted with the programme as a source of commodity prices information, and also about 23.3% were facilitated with decision making on where or which market to dispose up their produce. Others were 22.5 who opined to increase in their income from inception of the programme, while 8.3% claimed to have experienced increased in marketability of their produce, and those who benefitted with an informed decision of what to produce constituted 7.5% respectively.

**Table 3 Respondents perceived benefit on the ACPB**

| Variables                                     | Frequency | Percentage (n=120) |
|---|-----------|--------------------|
| Source of market information                  | 39        | 32.5               |
| Information on where to dispose their product | 28        | 23.3               |
| Increase in income                            | 27        | 22.5               |
| Marketability of produce                      | 10        | 8.3                |
| Decision on what to produce                   | 9         | 7.5                |

**Source:** Field Survey, 2013

Prices broadcast is a marketing information system that help farmers to obtain good prices for their product, hence obtain profit from their production with which to increase their income and earn good living, and make an informed decision on when and where to sell their Crops (Isiaku 2012).

#### **Problems Associated with ACPB**

The institute mandate was to cover as many rural markets and agricultural commodities as possible to provide key information required by producers, processors, marketers as well as consumers, for informed decision making. However, due to financial constraints, technical rehabilitation on some Radio Corporation, coupled with that, is the exorbitant charges per air time which has made the institution unable to respond to several demands for the expansion of the broadcast to cover more commodities and markets.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Evidently the study revealed that overall farmers positive disposition to commodity price programme was high. Farmers perceive efficacy was positive. However, programme timing and frequency was rated low.

Farmers benefited most from the programme as a source of market information for agricultural commodities and least from an informed decision on what to produce. It is therefore recommended that:

- More market information on commodity prices from other location should be sought and effort should be intensified for more awareness on the programme for national and agricultural development.
- Government and non-governmental organization should put more effort in funding the programme in order to cover more locations and commodities.
- A review of timing and frequency per week is necessary in order to meet small scale farmers needs who form the majority of Nigerian farmers.
- Other media such as television and newspapers could be employed to air the programme for listeners across the country.



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