

## Coverage of organic agricultural news in Nigerian Newspapers

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### Abstract

*The study was on coverage and content analysis of organic agricultural news in 3 selected Nigerian Newspapers. The Nigerian Tribune, Guardian and Punch newspapers. The study covered the period of January 2010 – July 2012.*

*Result showed that Tribune (61.9%) has the highest number of reportage with punch being the least. The newspapers reported more general issues (66.7%) than the other content categories which are food safety news (19%), economic concentration news (9.5%), and environmental news (4.8%). Tribune allotted more space to organic agricultural news with 76.8% than Guardian 15.2% and Punch 8.1%. There is no significant difference in the types of newscoverage on Organic agricultural articles in the selected Newspapers ( $F = 0.227$ ,  $p = 0.799$ ). The study concluded that coverage of organic agriculture is low, this affects the level of awareness of the people in the practice. The study recommends that Nigeria press should be sensitive to issues on organic agriculture.*

### Introduction

There is a growing concern about the environmental impact and health risks of food grown with the aid of chemical fertilizers, synthetic pesticides; to disseminate this information needs to be treated with urgent action on the part of the government and the whole populace. Communicating ideas to farmers through the news print media solicit a more effective response. Effective News, information and communication becomes pertinent before development can take place (Oladeji and Olowu, 2001). Newspapers provide information, create awareness, increase knowledge and stimulate positive attitudes of people towards issues. Yahaya and Olowu (1993) asserts that despite the increasing number of dailies being published in Nigeria, it is very important to note that coverage of agriculture based news is extremely low. Therefore, there is need to get the farmers and the consumers informed about the benefits of organic agriculture. This study aimed to examine the extent to which the Nigerian Newspaper covers information on organic agriculture.

### Material and methods

Three Nigerian daily newspapers that have been in continuous production were selected. The sampled newspapers were the Nigerian Tribune, the Punch, and the Guardian daily newspapers. They are among the most widely read thereby having a wider coverage in Nigeria as noted by Nigeria Press Council (2010). Though organic agriculture has been in practice for decades, but it was not until recently (less than 10 years) that researchers started talking about the benefits due to its impact on the environment, food safety and health. Based on this, a period of two years, starting from January 2010 – July, 2012 was chosen as the time frame for this study.

### Results

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of organic agriculture articles in the selected newspapers within the chosen time frame (January 1st, 2010 – July 31st, 2012).

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**Table 1: Frequency distribution of organic agriculture articles in the three selected Newspapers.**

Year	Tribune	Guardian	Punch	Total
2010	05	02	-	07
2011	06	01	01	08
2012	02	02	02	06
Total	13	05	03	21

**Table 2: Types of Organic Agriculture news in the selected newspapers from Jan, 2010-July, 2012.**

Content Categories	Tribune	Guardian	Punch	Total
Food Safety	2(9.5)*	1(4.8)	1(4.8)	4(19)
Environment	1(4.8)	-	-	1(4.8)
Economic concentration	-	2(9.5)	-	2(9.5)
General issues	10(47.6)	2(9.5)	2(9.5)	14(66.7)
Total	13	5	3	21

**Table 3: ANOVA result of the significant difference in types of Organic Agricultural news in the three selected newspapers.**

Variable	Df	Mean square	f-value	p-value	Decision
Content category	2	0.366	0.227	0.799	Not significant

P > 0.05

## Discussion

In 2010, the total news that was reported on organic agriculture was seven (7). In 2011, total reportage on organic agriculture was eight (8). From January 1st – July 31st, 2012, total reportage in the three selected newspapers was six (6). This implies that organic agricultural news was not frequent in the newspapers.

Table 2 reveals that the three selected newspapers reported more general issues (66.7%) than the other content categories. This result shows that less attention is being given to issues relating to impact of organic agriculture on food safety and environment. This is in line with Abolade, 2011, which says that inadequate information on organic agriculture contribute to the low level of people involvement in organic agricultural practices.

The result on table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in the type of coverage of Organic agricultural articles in agricultural news in the three selected Nigerian daily newspapers (F-value =0.227, p-value is=0.799), This implies that the three selected Nigerian daily newspapers cover general issues.

## Suggestions to tackle with the future challenges of organic animal husbandry

This study reveals the low level of coverage of organic agriculture by the selected newspapers and this affects the awareness and participation of people in the practice. This study has sensitized the print media to pay a careful attention to the reporting pattern, content, direction and space allotted to Organic Agriculture

and other agriculture related news by newspapers editors, reporters, researcher, farmers and all stakeholders.

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