

Short Communication

**ROLE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN DISSEMINATING INFORMATION FOR
LIVESTOCK/POULTRY PRODUCTION**

G. A. Khan, S. Muhammad and K. M. Chaudhary

Institute of Agri. Extension and Rural Development, Univ. of Agri., Faisalabad
Corresponding author's e-mail: agrigak444@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Livestock/poultry sector is a major contributor in the context of food provision as well as backstopping of the economy of Pakistan. The paper encompasses the outcomes of a study conducted regarding role of electronic media in the dissemination of information related to livestock/poultry. The data were collected through interview schedule from 330 randomly selected farmers from Faisalabad district. The analysis of the data reveals that mobile phone appeared comparatively more prominent electronic medium for getting livestock/poultry related information in an immediate and quick manner because of its interactive nature. Precautionary measures/cure against diseases was found to be the prominent area with regard to extent of information obtained and through various electronic media and its perceived effectiveness. Livestock/poultry products, marketing, and precautionary measures/cure against diseases were reported to be the prominent future preferred areas. There is a need to revitalize the electronic media (under study) for the effective dissemination of livestock/poultry related information. It is also emphasized to focus on livestock/poultry products, marketing, and precautionary measures/cure against diseases.

Key words: electronic media, dissemination of information, livestock/poultry production.

INTRODUCTION

Depending upon only crop sector for our food and other requirements does not seem the real solution to cater food insecurity. In this regard, livestock/poultry sector has opened new horizons for addressing food and other requirements of our ever-growing population. Now it is regarded as the era of white revolution (milk) which is in combination with meat and egg production play a vital role to meet our food requirements. Livestock sector has offered multifaceted benefits to the farmers in terms of food security and poverty reduction by increasing their income (Akhtar *et al.*, 2008). However, there is a dire need to develop this sector to keep pace with the emerging national as well as international demands. The importance of this sector is also revealed by the high participation of both men and women, in various activities pertinent to livestock management (Amin *et al.*, 2010). The information related to livestock should be disseminated to the rural community for enhancing their income levels (Hashmi *et al.*, 2007). Farmers are receiving livestock information to varying degrees regarding various aspects like feeding, milking etc. (Mansoor *et al.*, 2012.). However, there is a need to create awareness among women regarding their rights through various agencies (including media) for uplifting decision making process regarding various livestock activities (Arshad *et al.*, 2010). Being important contributors in this sector, women should be trained and

educated on scientific lines for increasing livestock production (Saghir *et al.*, 2005).

For uplifting the production of livestock and poultry sectors, it seems extremely important to keep our farmers up-dated regarding various production and marketing practices. It is quite obviously, intense care is required at various steps involved production to marketing. Awareness and adoption of modern and latest information can pave the way in this regard. Urgent and immediate nature of pertinent information has become very much essential particularly to cure diseases or address health issues etc. For the immediate and efficient information delivery, electronic media can play a vital role. Radio remained on the scenario in the past in the provision of livestock information. Today TV is also contributing in providing such information in an effective way (Muhammad *et al.*, 2012). Telephonic contacts regarding various livestock related Govt. and private agencies are also reflected through various newspapers and other printed material as well as on electronic media like TV. The telephonic contacts facilitate the livestock farmers to get immediate and urgent information in case of any emergency. Likewise, mobile phone is another fast growing opportunity for the farmers to broaden the scope of their connectivity in swift fashion. It is a mean of quick and better communication to access needed information on crops and livestock/poultry. For the convenience of livestock farmers, toll free help lines are also available in the country (Khan *et al.*, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Punjab province (Pakistan). Faisalabad district was purposively selected keeping in view the suitability of research district and the limitation of time and funds. For the selection of 330 respondent farmers from the district, a multistage random sampling technique was used. Various stages involved selection of rural union councils, villages, and ultimately farmers by using simple random technique at each stage. For probing into the real information a validated and reliable interview schedule was developed covering various spheres including livestock and poultry which was pretested before giving it a final shape. Pertinent research (Muhammad *et al.*, 2008) and experts in the field of livestock/poultry facilitated in formulation of questions related to the said spheres. A five point Likert scale was used to assess the farmers' perceptions regarding information receiving and effectiveness thereof regarding poultry/livestock realms through various electronic media and future preferred areas. Weighted scores were calculated by multiplying the score value allotted to each category of the scale with the frequency count and then adding up the same. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of livestock /poultry related information received through electronic media: Various diseases are prevalent in poultry birds which cause even mortality (Ahmad *et al.*, 2012). For better dairy production, proper policies and motivation through incentives for the farmers can pave the way (Akhtar *et al.*, 2011). Keeping in view, the importance of various spheres of poultry and livestock sectors, the areas of livestock and poultry

production were included farm management, livestock/poultry products (dairy, meat, egg etc.), precautionary measures/ cure against diseases, breeding techniques, marketing, and livestock/ poultry loan scheme. With the help of a five point Likert scale (1= Very Low, 2= Low, 3= Medium, 4= High, 5=Very High) the farmers were asked about the extent of getting information pertinent to aforesaid areas from the electronic media. Considering the data collected, the scores were calculated which are depicted in Table 1.

The data given in Table 1 depict that the respondents obtained the maximum information regarding livestock/poultry in the area of precautionary measures/cure against diseases which get the highest score (180) followed by livestock/poultry products with a little difference of score (164). Farm management was the next subsequent area with score value 85. The score values further reduced in cases of marketing (48) and the breeding techniques (38). Livestock/poultry loan schemes acquired the lowest score of 14.

Looking at the dimensions of possible contributions of various electronic media, mobile phone acquired the leading position with score value 247 followed by radio (112), telephone (84), TV (78). However the helpline attained the lowest position with the score of (8).

Moreover, the use of mobile phone appeared more prominent in terms of precautionary measures/cure of diseases with the highest score (105). It may be conceived from the data that farmers are more conscious about the nature of information and the timing for its use. So, they were comparatively more inclined towards making contacts through mobile phones with veterinary doctors and practitioners etc. in an interactive form as compared to other media.

Table 1. Extent of getting information through electronic media regarding various areas related to livestock/poultry production

Areas regarding livestock/ poultry production	Radio	TV	Mobile Phone	Telephone	Helpline	Total
	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	
Farm management	25	16	30	14	-	85
Livestock/poultry products (dairy, meat, egg etc.)	34	42	63	23	2	164
Precautionary measures/ cure against diseases	27	13	105	31	4	180
Breeding techniques	9	1	20	6	2	38
Marketing	9	5	25	9	-	48
Livestock/ poultry loan schemes	8	1	4	1	-	14
Total	112	78	247	84	8	

Contrary to the present findings, Fawole (2006) based on a study conducted in Nigeria to find out the information use by the poultry farmers, found that TV (68%) appeared as the major medium for obtaining the

information as reported by the respondents. Okwu *et al.* (2007) probed into the efficacy of an agri. radio programme in the dissemination of information among the farmers. The respondents also reported about getting

the knowledge regarding livestock. Muhammad *et al.* (2012) revealed TV and radio as information source regarding various spheres including livestock and poultry. However, TV was relatively in leading position as compared to radio.

Extent of effectiveness of livestock/poultry related information obtained through electronic media: The real worth of any electronic medium is concerned not

only with the extent information obtained but also with the perceived effectiveness on the part of the users. Keeping in view the importance of this aspect, the data regarding the effectiveness with respect to various areas of livestock/poultry related information were collected by using five point Likert scale. Based upon the collected data, the scores were calculated which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' perceived effectiveness of information regarding various areas of livestock/poultry delivered through electronic media

Areas regarding livestock/ poultry production	Radio	TV	Mobile Phone	Telephone	Helpline	Total
	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	
Farm management	20	19	42	24	-	105
Livestock/poultry products (dairy, meat, egg etc.)	29	42	104	33	2	210
Precautionary measures/ cure against diseases	25	12	147	42	4	230
Breeding techniques	9	1	33	9	4	56
Marketing	8	4	38	19	-	69
Livestock/ poultry loan schemes	6	1	8	3	-	18
Total	97	79	372	130	10	

The data presented in Table 2 clearly indicate that mobile phone appeared at the top position with score value 372 followed by telephone 130. The other subsequent electronic media were radio (97) and TV (79). Helpline was again achieved at the lowest score. In the overall scenario, the most prominent area of perceived effectiveness was again precautionary measures/cure of diseases followed by livestock/poultry products with a little difference of score values. The other successive area was farm management with score value 105. The score values further reduced in cases of marketing (69) and breeding techniques (56). The area about livestock/poultry loan schemes also remained at the lowest level (18). It quite obvious that farmers' perceived effectiveness was more in case of interactive media like mobile phone and landline telephone as compared to the other media.

The information reflected in Tables 1 and 2 also reveals that there appeared higher weighted scores in each sphere of livestock/poultry production in terms of effectiveness as compared to information obtained. It may be perceived that the livestock/poultry information obtained through electronic media was worth (effectiveness) for the respondents.

Preferences of various areas of livestock/poultry related information for future: It seems quite logical to get the future scenario in the light of farmers' preferences for different areas of livestock/poultry related information to be obtained through electronic media in the days to come. These preferences could pave the way to set the priorities set by the experts in the field of livestock/poultry and media authorities. Based upon the

data collected, the scores were calculated, which are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondents' future preferences for obtaining information about various areas of livestock/poultry through electronic media

Areas regarding livestock/ poultry production	No.	Score
Farm management	41	100
Livestock/poultry products (dairy, meat, egg etc.)	104	244
Precautionary measures/ cure against diseases	87	224
Breeding techniques	38	126
Marketing	67	232
Livestock/ poultry loan scheme	28	79

The data presented in Table 3 reflect that in the near future, the most preferred areas by the respondents were livestock/poultry products with the highest score (244), marketing (232), and precautionary measures/cure against diseases (224), with a small difference of scores. Other subsequent prominent areas were breeding techniques (126) followed by farm management (100). Livestock and/poultry loan scheme was the least preferred area with score value of 79.

Conclusions: The mobile phone appeared a robust tool for getting livestock/poultry related information in immediate and quick manner on account of its interactive nature. Precautionary measures/cure against diseases

proved to be most the prominent area in terms of obtaining information and perceived effectiveness. Moreover, the livestock/poultry products, marketing, and precautionary measures/cure against diseases appeared to be future prominent preferred areas.

Recommendations: There is a dire need to expedite up-to-date information delivery through various available electronic media covering diversified spheres in an earnest and effective manner. The reason is obvious, all these electronic media have their own strengths that should be exploited for the effective dissemination of information on livestock/poultry. Moreover, the areas like the livestock/poultry products, marketing, and precautionary measures/cure against diseases should be addressed on priority basis.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, I., M. S. Anjum and M. Hanif (2012). Prevalence of poultry diseases at high altitudes of district Poonch Azad Jammu & Kashmir. *Pakistan J. Sci.*, 64 (4):334-336.
- Akhtar, J., M. Hussain, M. A. Javid and M. Ishaque (2011). Demand and supply analysis of milk production: a case study of district Sargodha. *Pakistan J. Sci.*, 63(3):147-149.
- Akhtar, S., M. Younas, A. Iqbal and M.Z. Alam (2008). Management profile and contribution of livestock in poverty alleviation and nutritional improvement in peri-urban areas of Faisalabad. *Pakistan J. Agri. Sci.*, 45(2): 381-385.
- Amin, H., T. Ali, M. Ahmad and M.I. Zafar (2010). Gender and development: roles of rural women in livestock production in Pakistan. *Pakistan J. Agri. Sci.*, 47(1):32-36.
- Arshad, S., S. Muhammad, M. A. Randhawa, I. Ashraf and K.M. Chuadhry (2010). Rural women's involvement in decision-making regarding livestock management. *Pakistan J. Agri. Sci.*, 47(2):1-4.
- Fawole. O.P. (2006). Poultry farmers' utilization of information in Lagelu local government area, Oyo State of Nigeria. *Int. J. Poultry Sci.*, 5(5): 499-501.
- Hashmi, A. H., A. A. Maann, K. Asghar and M. Riaz (2007). Gender roles in livestock management and their implication for poverty reduction in rural Toba Tek Singh, Punjab-Pakistan. *Pakistan J. Agri. Sci.*, 44(4):674-678.
- Khan, G.A., S. Muhammad, K.M. Chaudhry and M.A. Khan (2010). Present status and future preferences of electronic media as agricultural information sources by the farmers. *Pakistan J. Agri. Sci.*, 47 (2): 166-172.
- Mansoor, K.M. Chaudhry, S. Muhammad, I. Ashraf and U. Ghaffoor (2012). Farmer's perceptions of livestock production practices introduced by Punjab Rural Support Program (PRSP). *Pakistan J. Agri. Sci.*, 49(2), 233-235.
- Muhammad S., T.E. Lodhi and G.A. Khan (2012). In-depth analysis of electronic media to enhance their role in agricultural technology transfer in the Punjab, Pakistan. *Pakistan J. Agri. Sci.*, 49(2):221-227.
- Muhammad, S., T.E. Lodhi, and G.A. Khan (2008). An in-depth analysis of the electronic media for the development of a strategy to enhance their role in agricultural technology transfer in the Punjab, Pakistan. Final Report of Research Project submitted to Higher Education Commission, Islamabad.
- Okwu, O.J., A.A. Kuku, and J.I. Aba (2007). An assessment of use of radio in agricultural information dissemination: a case study of radio Benue in Nigeria. *African J. Agri. Res.*, 2 (1): 014-018.
- Saghir, A., T. Ali, M. Ahmad and M. Zakaria (2005). Gender participation in livestock production activities and their consumption trend of proteineous diet in tehsil Fateh Jung. *Pakistan J. Agri. Sci.*, 42(3-4):89-92.