

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF DAIRY FARMERS

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Abstract: The study on information seeking behavior of the dairy farmers was undertaken in Erode District of Tamilnadu with the objectives to study socio economic profile of dairy farmers and to study the relationship of socio-economic variables with information seeking behavior of dairy farmers. Seventy dairy farmers of Erode District were selected randomly for the study and information was collected. Various socio economic variables such as age, education, land holding, number of dairy cattle and dairy farm experience were considered for gathering the information and then these variables were used to relate with information seeking behavior. The results of the study revealed that socio economic variables had influenced the information seeking behavior of dairy farmers.

Introduction

Information seeking behavior is a broad term encompassing the ways individuals articulate their information needs, seek, evaluate, and use the needed information. According to Pettigrew (1996), information-seeking behaviour involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information which are being sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought. Barriers that prevent individuals from seeking and getting information are also of great importance in understanding the information-seeking behaviour of individuals and organizations.

A cognition or information acquisition depends on needs of individuals involved in special activities such as dairy farming and home management. Farmers constantly manage and adapt their farm businesses in order to remain competitive in a changing world. This is done by finetuning existing practices and technologies or by adopting innovations, such as novel products, technologies or practices. Where there are a number of alternatives, it is necessary for the farmer to choose which innovation, or suite of innovations, will provide the most benefit and best meet the needs of the farm business. Kaine (2004) suggests that this process

is highly involving, or important to the farmer as it usually has significant implications for the farm business. Therefore, when making an important decision the farmer will devote time and effort to collecting information, considering the alternatives and selecting the best option, in order to minimise the risk of “getting it wrong”. This process is known as complex decision making (Assael 1998).

The purposeful search for information to inform decision making is called information-seeking behaviour (Wilson 1981). Hence it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of various sources of information which can induce the farmers to adopt improved practices.

Materials and Methods

The present study was undertaken to analyze the information seeking behavior of the dairy farmers of Erode District of Tamilnadu with the objectives to study socio- economic profile of dairy farmers and to study the relationship of socio-economic variables with information seeking behavior of dairy farmers. Seventy dairy farmers of Erode District were selected randomly for the study and information was collected through personal interview method. Various socio economic variables such as age, education, number of dairy cattle and Dairy farm experience were considered for gathering the information and then these variables were used to relate with information seeking behavior. Statistical tools were employed to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion

The data in Table 1 reveals that majority of the dairy farmers (52.86%) belonged to medium category with respect to level of information seeking behavior followed by high (31.43%) and low (15.71%). Thus, the majority of the dairy farmers had medium to high level of information seeking behavior might be due to interest in the dairy activities and urge among the dairy farmers to get more profit out of dairy farming.

Table 1. Distribution of dairy farmers according to their information seeking behavior

Information seeking behaviour	Number of dairy farmers (N = 70)	Percentage
Category		
Low	11	15.71
Medium	37	52.86
High	22	31.43

Table 2. Distribution of dairy farmers according to various Source of information which induce them to adopt the improved practices

Source of information	Number of dairy farmers (N = 70)	Percentage
Extension agent	31	44.29
Veterinary Assistant Surgeon	15	21.43
Mass media (Television, Radio and Newspaper)	10	14.29
Fellow farmers	4	5.71

The results in Table 2 showed that 44.29 percent of dairy farmers indicated Extension agent as their source of information, 21.43 percent indicated Veterinary Assistant Surgeon followed by Mass media (Television, Radio and Newspaper) was indicated by 14.29 percent of dairy farmers and only 5.71 percent of the dairy farmers indicated fellow farmers as their source of information. Similar findings were reported by Hatekar (1990) and Harsha Mendhe and M.N.Jadhav(2010).

Table 3. Relationship between the socio – economic variables and information seeking behaviour

Socio - economic Variable	Information seeking behavior Low	Information seeking behavior Medium	Information seeking behavior High
1.Age in Years			
Upto 30	02(2.86%)	8(11.43%)	8(11.43%)
31 to 40	07(10.00 %)	25(35.71%)	12(17.14%)
40 and above	02(2.86 %)	4(5.71%)	2(2.86%)
2.Education			
a .Illiterate	7(10.00%)	1(1.43%)	0(0.00%)
b. Primary School	3(4.29%)	4(5.71%)	0(0.00%)
c. Middle school	1(1.43%)	9(12.86%)	0(0.00%)
d. High School	0(0.00%)	11(15.71%)	10(14.29%)
e. Collegiate	0(0.00%)	12(17.14%)	12(17.14%)
3.Dairy animals			
1 to 3	10(14.29%)	5(7.14%)	0(0.00%)
4 to 7	1(1.43 %)	17(24.29 %)	4(5.71 %)

7 to 10	0(0.00%)	15(21.43 %)	18(25.71%)
4. Dairy farm experience in years			
Below 2 years	10(14.29%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)
2 to 5 years	1(1.43 %)	27(38.57%)	2(2.86 %)
Above 5 years	0(0.00%)	10(14.29%)	20(28.57%)

It is observed from Table 3 that with regards to the relationship of age and education to the information seeking behaviour of dairy farmers, medium to high level of information seeking behaviour was seen in the age group of 31 to 40 Years and those whom undergone high school and college level of education. Similar findings were reported by Harsha Mendhe and M.N.Jadhav(2010). With respect to relationship of dairy animals and dairy farm experience with the information seeking behaviour. Medium to high level of information seeking behaviour is noticed in dairy farmers those who possess more than 4 dairy animals and possess more than two years of dairy farm experience. The results of the study revealed that socio economic variables had influenced the information seeking behavior of dairy farmers. The results also emphasize the need for the extension agency to regularly identify those sources of information through regular contact with farmers and concerted efforts should be made by the extension agencies to deliver the dairy information effectively to the farmers for the adoption of newer practices in their farm.

Conclusion

This paper suggests that effective extension service should be designed with the farmer's information needs in mind. This would reduce the number of sources of information the farmer needed to access, reducing the time and effort the farmer had to spend on information seeking behaviour, and potentially hastening the adoption decision

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