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Challenges of Agricultural Statistics and Database Management in Kogi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigated the challenges of agro-data statistics and database management in Kogi State, Nigeria. The various constraints in agro-data management were examined. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used to obtain information from 180 farmers and 30 extension agents proportionately and randomly selected from three Local Government Areas in Kogi State. The collected data was analyzed using Likert scale, charts and percentage. The results reveal that farmer and institution related problems are the types of constraints facing agricultural data collection and processing in Nigeria. The farmer related constraints include: illiteracy/lack of skills, motivation requirement to give information, uneasiness of the farmer to disclose information and fear of taxation with weighted average of 4.7, 4.5, 3.6 and 3.0 respectively. The institution related constraints include: underdevelopment of agriculture, lack of government personnel and unenforced company tax on cooperate farms with weighted average of 3.9, 3.8 and 3.3 respectively. These constraints made collection of agro-data difficult and statistics inaccurate and unreliable. However, there were prospects for overcoming the challenges with increase in budgetary allocation and training of personnel of extension services. It was recommended that the extension contacts of the farmers should be increased, farmers should be involved in the planning stage of farm survey, and free farm record books might be given to the farmers, statistical officers and enumerators should be trained and re-trained and logistics and infrastructure be provided.

Keywords: *Agro-database, Agricultural statistics, Farmers' related Constraints and Institutional Constraints.*

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture sector is a central key to the national food security and welfare of the majority of the Nigerians. It is a major driver of economic growth in Nigeria (Igwe *et al.*, 2013). It contributes about 42.07% to her GDP (FAO, 2011; Simpa and Peter, 2015). It plays a critical function in the alleviation of poverty among low-income people. Based on these indispensable roles play by agriculture in Nigeria, adequate and reliable data on agro-food are of necessity for policy makers and agricultural promotion.

Despite the importance of agricultural data production, Nigeria has not conducted a conclusive agricultural census in the last three decades (FAO, 2011). The results of some survey-census exercises were not analyzed while another attempt ended at the pilot stage; thus resulting in agricultural data gap. The federal and state governments' counterpart funding for the exercise was not released even after donor agencies and development partners had redeemed theirs (FAO, 2011).

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The key objectives of the agricultural survey include: collection of relevant statistics to compute the contribution of agriculture to the production of GDP, for use of institutions and agencies within and outside the country, for farm planning and organization, planning agricultural extension services, appraisal and evaluation of agricultural projects, government budgetary policies, preparation of food balance sheet, agricultural production forecasting and pricing policy (Adegeye with Dittoh, 1985; Reddy et. al., 2008). Agricultural statistics such as institutional data, price data, production data, government expenditure, and import and export data are useful for research, development and investment. Agro-food data helps to monitor some of the government policies in food security programmes. Therefore, agricultural data should be relevant, reliable, consistent and easy to be interpreted and understood.

However, agricultural sector is fraught with serious data problems (Oladuni, 2015). Agricultural policy formulations are drawn from the scanty available statistics (FAO, 2011). Agricultural statistics ranks very low among government commitments and thus National Statistical System has been poorly resourced in that direction (Oladuni, 2015). Also, farmers do not appreciate the role of farm survey and agriculture activities are not properly captured leading to non-availability of reliable data (Oladuni, 2015; Adegeye and Dittoh 1985). The peculiarities of agricultural data production, especially with reference to scope, geographical coverage, cost, the need for regular farmer-enumerator interaction and multiplicity of participating agencies makes it a difficult task. Again, some of the data problems result from method of collection. Therefore, unavailability of accurate data makes research a guess work (Reddy *et. al*., 2008). More importantly, structures such as National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and Agricultural Data Bank Project of Federal Ministry Agriculture and Natural Resources that are involved in the Agricultural Data Management in Nigeria (collection and processing of agricultural data) are not active for lack of funding (FAO, 2011).

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) which was established in 2004 is the apex statistical body in Nigeria responsible for implementation of all statistical activities under the National Statistical System (NSS) and in particular ensures data storage, output processing, direct access and retrieval from database. The various bodies under NSS produce various data according to diverse numbers of products such as tree and arable crops, forestry, livestock and fisheries, which are usually regional and climatic specific. The generated data through surveys and censuses can be classified into basic data, current data and survey data (Adegeye and Dittoh, 1985).

Nigeria's crops and livestock data are characterised by un-timeliness, incompleteness (space- and time-wise) and absence of information on reliability of estimates (Oladuni, 2016). Data timeliness and punctuality are still challenges to the Nigerian statistical system (Adegeye and Dittoh, 1985, NBS, 2015). The agro-food data collection system in Nigeria is uncoordinated and weak due to duplication of mandates, poor funding, lack of equipment and physical infrastructure, as well as few and poorly motivated personnel. The consequence is that the system could not sustain regular surveys and therefore unable to produce reliable, complete, consistent and timely statistics to meet the needs and expectations of the users. And data generated from such process is not detailed enough to be useful (Oladuni, 2015).

The problems which affect the production of crops and livestock data in the country can be grouped into those resulting from resource limitations as well as from methodological and non-response problems. In Nigeria, data production is yet to be recognised as a costly venture. Every agency involved in production of crops and livestock data are inadequately

funded. They also lack resources, especially vehicles and equipment (NBS, 2015). Also, the interval between data production, data release and the effective date of dissemination varies significantly. The reason is that the conduct of agricultural surveys is not regulated, but subject to availability of funds. The delay of three to four years in publishing results of data collected is partly due to these problems (FAO, 2011).

Due to some weaknesses in the National Statistical System and the poor implementation of the NSDS, many organizations are known to embark on agricultural data collection exercises and come up with varying data sets on similar subjects. Much of the State-based data on crops and livestock are published with numerous blank cells for several years (NBS, 2015). This makes nonsense of any national aggregate that may be computed for the reporting States. Most of the estimates of parameters such as production, area, yield obtained from surveys and censuses have no standard errors and the reliability of such estimates cannot be assessed (FAO, 2011).These are some of the problems which render some estimates of key parameters for example; crop yields, inconsistent with peer country data, and compel international agencies to search for non-domestic sources. Data producers lack the culture of properly documenting the methods and procedures leading to the generation of their data. Data production should be user focused (Carkner, 2000). Generally, users appreciate data that are reliable, consistent, complete, timely and sufficiently disaggregated. Therefore, the objectives of this paper are: to investigate the farmer and institution related challenges facing agricultural data collection and processing in Nigeria and prospects of building a reliable database for agriculture.

METHODOLOGY

The Study Area

Kogi State, has a population of 3,314,043 (NPC, 2006). The State is located between latitude 6º30'N and 8º30'N of equator and longitude 5º51'E and 8º00'E of Greenwich Meridian. It has an area of 30,554.74 square kilometres (Simpa, 2014; KOSEEDS, 2004). The state has two main seasons, viz; rainy season (March to October) and dry season (November to February). The state is regarded as confluence state and found in the Guinea forest-savanna ecological zone of Nigeria. Kogi State is bordered by other states as follows: to the North East by Nasarawa State, East by Benue State, South East by Enugu State, South by Anambra State, West by Ondo and Ekiti States, North East by Kwara State and North by Niger State and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (Simpa, 2014). Kogi State has an average of 172,000 farm families. Over 70% of this population live in rural areas and engage in agricultural production (Simpa, 2014; Kogi ADP, 1995). The farmers produce arable and tree crops and rear animals of various breeds.

Data were collected from 180 farmers and 30 extension agents. The respondents were purposively selected from Adavi, Okene and Okehi Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Kogi State because of preponderance of farmers in these areas. A multi-stage random sampling technique was used for the selection of the respondents. Questionnaire and interview schedule were the instruments used for data collection. Thirty (30) respondents each were randomly selected from six farm centres from the three selected LGAs. The selected farm centres were Osara and Irepeni, Ogunda and Achoze and Utoro and Abobo from Adavi, Okene and Okehi respectively. Ten (10) extension agents each were randomly selected from the headquarters of each LGA. The analytical technique used for the data collected on farmer and institution related constraints of agricultural data collection and processing was descriptive statistic (frequencies, percentages and likert scale type).

Likert scale degree: very important = 5 points, important = 4 points, undecided = 3 points, not important =2 points and not very important = 1 point.

$$Total\ Weighted\ score = \sum X1W1 + X2W2 + X3W3 + X4W4 + X5W5 - - - -(i)$$

$$Weighted\ mean = \frac{total\ weigted\ score}{N} -(ii)$$

$$Critical\ mean = \frac{5+4+3+2+1}{5} = \frac{15}{5} = 3.0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -(iii)$$

Where; X = no of respondents, W = no of ranks, N = total number of sample.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic-educational Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1: Socio-economic-educational characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Farmers			**Extension Agents**		
Formal education			**Formal education level**		
No education	70	38.9	O'level	5	16.7
Primary	50	27.8	OND	15	50.0
Secondary	35	19.4	HND	8	26.6
Tertiary	25	13.9	First degree	2	6.7
Total	**180**	**100**	**Total**	**30**	**100**
Mean	6.0		**Mean**		
			Mean		
Farming experience (years)			**Years of experience**		
<10 years	42	23.3	<10 years	10	33.3
11 -20	74	41.1	11 -20	14	46.7
>20	64	35.6	>20	6	20.0
Total	**180**	**100**	**Total**	**30**	**100**
Mean	16.7		**Mean**	14.2	
Extension contact			**Seminar Attendance (at least once a year)**		
0 – 1	120	66.7	**Yes**	4	13.3
2 – 3	45	25.0	**NO**	26	86.7
< 3	15	8.3	**Total**	**30**	**100**
Total	**180**	**100**			
Mean	0.9				

Source: *Field Survey, 2015.*

Most of the farmer respondents as shown in Table 1 had no formal education (38%) and few had primary (27%) and secondary (19.4%). This may influence the nature and accuracy of records kept by them which is one of the fundamental issues in agricultural data collection. This confirms the assertion of FAO (2015) that training personnel on data collection is very

necessary as farmers are not educated and kept no record. More than 76% of the farmers had more than 10 years of farming experience which shows that they may be knowledgeable in the data they gave to the enumerators in the course of this study. The farmers' extension contact was poor; about 68.7% of them had one or less contact throughout a farming season. This conforms to the findings of Simpa (2011) and Nwaru *et al.* (2011).

Eighty-three percent of the respondent extension agents had OND certificate and above with about 17% holding school certificate. This shows that they are educated enough to give enlightened responses in the course of the study. Sixty-eight percent of the extension agents had more than 10 years of working experience although about 87% of them had not attended any seminar in the past one year. This indicates that these extension agents though quite knowledgeable might not be informed about the most current issues in agriculture and so, may not be able to relate with farmers beyond their previous knowledge.

Farmer Related Constraints to Agricultural Data Production and Statistics

Table 2: Farmers' Related Constraints to Agricultural Data Production and Statistics

Likert items	**No of Respondents**	**Weighted score** (X)	**Weighted Average**	**Remark**
Illiteracy/lack of skills	180	860	4.7	1st **
Motivation required to give information	180	820	4.5	2nd **
uneasiness of the farmers to disclose information	180	655	3.6	3rd **
Fear of taxation	180	540	3.0	4th *
Lack of farm records	180	520	2.8	5th *
Fear of enemy	180	460	2.5	6th *
Small scattered farm plots	180	380	2.1	7th *
Total (X)		**5415**		
Average of weighted score (all)		**601.7**		
Standard Deviation		**2701.7**		
Max		**860**		
Min		**380**		
Critical mean				≥3.0 =** <3.0 =*

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*, **Accepted as a serious constraint, *Not a serious constraint.

Table 2 shows the constraints facing agro-data collection as enumerated by the farmers. The individual weighted averages obtained from the weighted scores were used to rank the problems of data collection. The overall weighted mean was 601.7, standard deviation of 2701.7 and maximum and minimum scores of 860 and 380 respectively. This overall result shows the institution related constraints are important in data management in Nigeria generally and in study area in particular.

The serious constraints are ones with average weighted mean equal or greater than the critical mean of 3.0. The unserious constraints have average weighted mean of less than 3.0.

For the ranking; illiteracy and lack of skills was ranked 1st with weighted mean of 4.7; implying that this constraint was the most prominent among all the constraints considered?

Lack of formal education and skills in record keeping affect the accuracy of the data produced by illiterate rural farmers who are the key players in Nigerian agriculture (Stock, 2009; Simpa and Peter, 2015). This implies that the agro-data collected from farmers are doubtful and this would affect the aggregate of Nigeria's agro-food data which are used in policy formulation and decision making. This would invariably affect the quality of Government agricultural policies.

Farmers' quest for motivation before giving out their farm data was ranked 2nd. The popular jargon of; 'nothing goes for nothing;' is usually applied and more so; they strongly feel that the enumerators stand to gain from the information received from farmers and as such, farmers request for their own share. Therefore, in a situation where the enumerators are not able to afford any form of inducement, they get poor attention of the farmers and invariably poor information.

Uneasiness of Nigerian small-scale farmers to disclose information to agro-data enumerators was ranked 3rd. The farmer does not see the need to disclose data concerning his farm to a third party. This again affects the aggregate data collected (FAO, 2011). This too affects the quality of data collected and invariably statistics derived from them. This conforms to the finding of Oladuni, (2015).

Fear of taxation or similar implications that could result from volunteering information by farmers. This affects the quantity and veracity of information disclosed by farmers who sometimes believe that the purpose of all agricultural surveys is to gather information for taxing farmers. This makes insecure and dishonest farmers conceal information in a bid to save themselves from imagined high taxes. This is similar to the observation of Carkner (2000). This constraint was ranked 4th.

Lack of farm records was ranked 5th. Majority of the farmers did not keep written records and as such, they depended on their mental recalling ability whenever data was required from them (Oladuni, (2015; Adegeye and Dittoh, 1985). This also affects the quality of the information collected from farmers for agricultural database.

Fear of enemy by the farmers was ranked 6th. The farmer fears that if he discloses information about his farm, rivals and enemies may out of envy use the information against him. This results in an incomplete disclosure of information by the farmers.

The problem of scattered farm plots was ranked 7th. The farmers' plots are often small and scattered over places and thus making farm data collection tiresome and cumbersome. This results in scanty information and guess work.

Institution Related Constraints Facing Agricultural Data Production and Statistics Collected from the Extension Agents

Table 3: Institutional Related Constraints Facing Agricultural Data Production and Statistics

Likert items	**No of Respondents**	**Weighted score (X)**	**Weighted Average**	**Remark**
Under development of agriculture	30	126	4.2	1st **
Lack of government trained personnel	30	124	4.1	2nd **
Unenforced company taxes on farm firms (corporate farm)	30	119	3.9	3rd **
Inadequate extension programmes	30	115	3.8	4th **
Lack of facilities from banks.	30	100	3.3	5th **
Lack of association of farm managers	30	88	2.9	6th *
Inefficient marketing systems	30	86	2.8	7th *
Farm record books are expensive	30	76	2.5	8th *
Unregistered farms	30	70	2.3	9th *
Total (X)		**904**		
Average of weighted score (all)		**100.4**		
Standard Deviation		**466.1**		
Max		**126**		
Min		**70**		
Critical mean			3.0	≥3.0 =** <3.0 =*

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*, **Accepted as a serious constraint, *Not a serious constraint.

Table 3 is a Likert scaled and ranked using the individual weighted averages of the weighted scores of institution respondents. The overall average of the weighted score was 100.4, with standard deviation of 466.1 and maximum and minimum scores of 126 and 70 respectively. This overall result shows the institution related constraints are important in data management in Nigeria generally and in study area in particular.

Underdevelopment of agriculture, which means inability of Nigerian farmers to adopt modern scientific methods which invariably affect record keeping and attitude towards farm data. The farmers are have not progressed technologically. This was ranked 1st among all the variables and this shows its significance as a constraints.

Lack of government trained personnel in agro-data collection and production was ranked 2nd. Personnel that are involved both in data collection and processing are not usually well trained and this affects the quality of data collection, processing and management.

Unenforced company tax on farm firm (corporate farms) was ranked 3rd. If farms are taxed based on their output, the farmers would be forced to keep records to determine or for calculation of appropriate income tax. Without appropriate records the farmers might be under evaluated and assessed in tax payment.

Inadequacy of extension programme in educating farmers about how farm data affects agricultural statistics and it was ranked 4th. The extension programmes would have been avenues for training and educating farmers on the importance of farm data and agricultural statistic in general and how to keep farm records.

Lack of facilities from banks does not motivate the farmers to keep records. It was ranked 5th. One of the functions of records kept by farmers is to aid farmers in securing loans from

banks. Therefore, as farmers are not able to secure loans from banks, they are not motivated to keep farm records for that purpose. If banks were to inspect their records and give them loan, the farmers would have known the importance of farm data and then keep them accordingly.

Lack of association of farm managers was ranked 6th. Through association, members would have been motivating and influencing each other to keep accurate record and disclose them when demanded. This makes agricultural data unavailability.

Inefficient marketing system of agricultural product also affects agro-data and this ranked 7th. Efficient marketing system would have kept the record of all products that pass through it, but this is not obtainable in Nigerian agricultural marketing system. Therefore, this contributes to unavailability of accurate and reliable agricultural data.

Farm record books are expensive and this was ranked 8th. Some farmers could not afford the record books for record keeping. This discourages them from keeping farm records.

Unregistered farms was ranked 9th. Nigerian farms are not registered and as such they could not be easily traced for data collection. The unregistered small and scattered farms found all over the rural and remote areas make data collection difficult, tiresome, demanding in terms of time and capital intensive (Simpa, 2014).

Prospects of Agro-data Production and Statistics in Nigeria

Figure I depicts the factors that can result in accurate, consistent and reliable data management in Nigeria. The factors were listed on the questionnaire and respondents were allowed to make multiple choices and these were reduced to percentages and charted as shown below. All the factors were important, but increase in budgetary allocation to the course of farm data production, involvement of the farmers at the planning stage, provision of logistics, provision of infrastructure and farmers' education took the lead.

If the collected data are true representative of farm data, the result of processed data would be accurate and lead to a better agricultural policy formulation.

Farm records as part of the school curriculum would lead to a greater awareness of the importance of farm records and agricultural data right from secondary school level.

Distribution of free farm record books would provide enable environment for the farmers to keep records. It would motivate farmers to keep farm records. This would also make farm record keeping easier and less expensive.

Participation and involvement of farmers in the planning of agricultural data collection would make the agencies that are responsible for data collection to gain the confidence of the farmers even before going to the field work. This would make the farmers to be involved in data collection process and thus ask fewer questions and become less sceptical. The farmers would be happy that they are recognized and therefore, they would be ready to disclose accurate information.

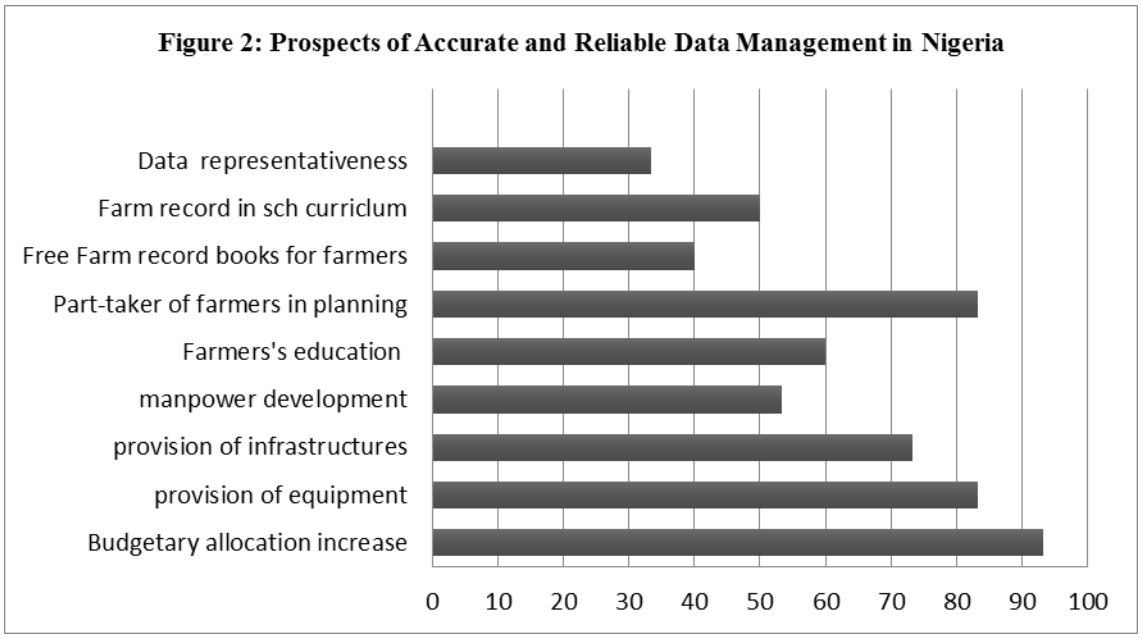
Formal and informal education of the farmers would make them to be enlightened about the purpose of data collection and use of data and they would no longer be sceptical about field officers or the enumerators or the use of the data being collected.

Agricultural and statistical man power development would lead to improvement in the process of data collection and processing. This would improve the efficiency of the workers that are involved in the collection and processing of data. The data generated and processed by empowered staff would be more accurate and reliable and more user friendly.

Provision of equipment for the purpose of data collection and processing would make the processes efficient. Lack of adequate equipment for data collection and processing is always a problem facing farmers and agricultural data enumerators and processors.

Provision of infrastructures like roads, electricity, and portable water in the rural areas where the farmers are settled would make agricultural data collection field officers to settle in rural areas and do their work with all zeal. More people would be willing to settle in rural areas and do their work more efficiently. This would lead to a more reliable and accurate data.

Improved budgetary allocation to agricultural sector and invariably to data collection and processing would lead to a more reliable data being collected and processed. Funding is always a problem to agricultural sector and data collection and processing in particular. The field officers would be motivated to put in their best in data collection. All the necessary equipments would be provided and fringe benefits provided for the staff. All these would lead to a more accurate and reliable data.



Source: Field survey, 2015.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the challenges facing agricultural data collection and processing in Nigeria. The respondents of this study were well experienced but had poor extension contact. Agricultural data management in Nigeria faces farmer related constraints (such as illiteracy, lack of skills and uneasiness to disclose information) and institution related constraints (such as under development of agriculture, lack of trained personnel and inadequate extension programmes). However, these problems are surmountable with increased budgetary allocation to the bodies that are saddled with the responsibility of agro-data collection and processing; involvement of the farmers at the planning stage and provision of equipment and infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Extension contacts of the farmers should be increased in order to educate farmers on the need for accurate record keeping and disclosure of same for reliable data collection and production.
- Farmers should be involved in the planning stage of farm survey so that they would cooperate with the enumerators for reliable data collection.
- Free farm record books might be given to the farmers to encourage them to keep records.
- Statistical officers and enumerators should be well trained for effective data collection.
- The government should increase the budgetary allocation to the Statistical Units for effective data management.
- The government should provide equipment and other basic logistics support for adequate coverage and supervision of data collection.

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