Extension Agents Use Information and Communication Technologies

BELLVILLE, TEXAS—Extension agents’ increased usage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) help educate farmers in isolated areas. By increasing communication between extension agents and farmers, ICTs bring hope to everyday farmers who struggle to generate a profit.

Maulid W. Mwatawala, a lecturer at Sokoine University in Tanzania, recently studied the effects of ICT programs on the relationship between extension agents and farmers.

Mwatawala said, “Information exchange by electronic means has revitalized the role of extension services in providing information, education, and decision-making assistance to agricultural producers.”

Extension offices’ ICT programs also empower farmers to educate themselves. For example, farmers can answer their own questions by accessing their extension offices’ online database to locate relevant information.
“In addition, ICTs enable extension workers to keep in touch with the technological advancement in areas inside and outside their personal expertise,” Mwatawala said.

This realization promotes agricultural advancement that may result in farmers’ increased profits.

According to a survey conducted by Mwatawala, traditional media, such as newspapers and radio stations, do not have regularly scheduled programs on agriculture. Thus, extension offices’ ICT programs are invaluable sources of agricultural information to farmers.

Researchers continue to discover additional ways ICTs benefit extension agents and farmers. ICT programs succeed because both extension agents and farmers seem eager to learn modern agricultural techniques. ICTs increase rural areas’ connectivity and introduce extension agents to their role in a digital world.

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