

Completing the Chain: Research-Extension-Farmer-Cooperatives - A Nigerian Experience

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Abstract

Tropical agricultural research has so far achieved excellent results in almost every field. However, these results seldom reach the ultimate target: the farmer. This is principally due to a missing link in the chain: research-extension-farmer. Four Agricultural Training Centres for young, small-scale farmers have so far been established in Nigeria by the Leventis Foundation, Lagos, in order to fill the gap between research and farmers. The one-year-long course gives male and female farmers 80 percent practical and 20 percent theoretical training. The ex- trainees are intended to act as catalysts in the promotion of modern agriculture practices among their farming communities once back on their own land. Many ex-trainees have formed cooperatives, which give them easier access to bank loans and the possibility of availing themselves of tractor and transportation services as well as bulk purchase of inputs. The impact of their methods have so far been tangible and improved models of cooperatives formed by these ex- trainees would accelerate the modernization and nationalization of the whole tropical agrarian system.