



Preferred Delivery Methods of Agronomic Crop Information by Farmers, Private Consultants, and Agricultural Retailers

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Introduction

While Extension serves as a mainstay of communication in agriculture, information communication technologies (ICTs) are changing how information is shared.

While ICTs represent the future, some Extension employees may lack the technological skills needed to provide their stakeholders with needed information.

While the use of ICTs appears to be a vital service provided by Extension to crop producers, there is a lack of research regarding the preferences for communicating critical information.

Theoretical Framework

Both the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974) and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003) were utilized in this study.

Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovation Theory is a foundation for building understanding of preferred information source and delivery channels for stakeholders in Mississippi to receive agronomic crop information.

Objective

The objective of this study was to describe Mississippi row crop farmers, agricultural retailers, and private consultants' preferred sources and channels for receiving agronomic crop related information.

Methodology

The target population for this study included agronomic crop producers, agricultural retailers, and private crop consultants who attended the Mississippi State University Row Crop Short Course, Mississippi State University Extension Row Crop Production Meetings, or the Mid-South Farm and Gin Show from December 2017 to March 2018.



Results

The majority of respondents were Caucasian male farmers between 35 and 64 years old. Almost half of the respondents had internet access either in their home or at their farm office.

Respondents were either a farmer, an agricultural retailer, or a private consultant. There was a significant difference between respondents' occupation and using Facebook as a preferred channel for receiving agronomic crop information.

Table 1 Ranking of Information Delivery Method Preferences

Table with 10 columns: Statement, 1-7 (rankings), M (mean), SD (standard deviation). Rows include preferences for crop blogs, email, Facebook, Instagram, postal mail, text messages, and Twitter.

Note: Response Rank = 1 being most preferred, 7 being least preferred

Table 2 ANOVA Results for Preferred Channels of Information by Occupation

Table with 4 columns: Channels, F, p, Partial Eta^2. Rows include Crop Blogs, Email, Facebook, Instagram, Postal Mail, Text, and Twitter.



Conclusions

Interpersonal sources, such as email and text, were the most preferred channels for obtaining agronomic crop information across all stakeholders. Despite having access to internet services, the use of social media, like Twitter, was low for obtaining agronomic crop information while email and text messages were preferred ways to receive agronomic crop related information.

Implications and Recommendations

One implication is that information provided only via the internet may be missed by farmers. Older farmers, farmers with lower education levels, and farmers without internet access will miss out on such information as their younger, better educated internet equipped peers become more updated.

While respondents indicated what was the least preferred delivery channels for obtaining crop information, no follow-up was made to ascertain how that delivery method could become more acceptable for obtaining agronomic crop information.

References

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