

## Experiences of Extension Officers in Implementing Crop Yield Competition

By

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### ABSTRACT

Informing the farmers through field staff and conducting general meetings in the villages were the methods used by the extension officers to give publicity to the crop yield competition. Overlapping with other activities as well as non-availability of judges at the time of harvest of the competition plots were the main administrative difficulties expressed by the extension personnel to conduct crop yield competition.

### INTRODUCTION

Many production programmes are being implemented by the change agents in their area to step up food production. Among the programmes to induce the farmers to increase the yield, crop yield competition is one of the programmes adopted. Kuppuswamy (1961) stated that competition may be based on a motive, when it is spurred by the desire for recognition and improvement in status or it may be due to an incentive when the desire is to win a competition or earn more money. Sandhu and Sohal (1966) found that major difficulties standing in the way of planning a better agricultural extension programme were: inadequate funds, rigid allocation of budget, more desk work, lack of guidance from superior officers, and limi-

tation of organized participation of the people. Singh (1970) stated that the past experience in communication administration had indicated that a number of barriers existed in extension administration, one such being, "delayed communication". This study was conducted to assess the experiences of extension officers in implementing crop yield competition in Madurai district.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Madurai district was selected purposively. All the 33 Agricultural Extension Officers (AEOs) and all the 40 District Agricultural Officers (DAOs) were selected as respondents for the investigation. The response of all these professional leaders were collected through a pretested

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mailed questionnaire. Only 28 AEOs and 27 DAOs provided the information. The data gathered were processed, tabulated and percentage analysis was worked out and the results interpreted objectively.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Publicity medium used by extension workers:** Agricultural extension officers used different extension methods to popularise crop yield competition among the farmers.

The use of mass media like radio and news paper was adopted by none of the extension officers to give publicity to this programme (Table 1).

Table 1. Methods used by AEOs to publicise crop yield competition

Extension methods	Percentage of respondents used
Informed the farmers through posters	7.14
Supplied leaflets, pamphlets, folders etc.	21.42
Wrote circular letters	25.00
Exhibitions, campaigns etc. were conducted	42.85
Conducted general meetings in the villages	64.28
Briefed the farmers through field staff	75.00

Note: Multiple responses are taken and the percentage may not add upto 100

**Administrative difficulties encountered in implementing crop competition:** Agricultural Officers and DAOs had stated that they were overburdened with multifarious activities

and hence could not bestow attention to this programme. Generally the harvesting season of any crop in a locality is not spread over a long period and it is confined to a fortnight or so. Hence, the staff find it difficult to take part in the harvest of crops in all places. Moreover the extension workers have to attend to many different production schemes in their area demanding their presence. The difficulties expressed by the AEOs and the DAOs were the failure of judges to be present at the time of harvest due to other engagements which jeopardize the programme already fixed for the harvest.

The above reasons given by the respondents seem to be valid in view of the fact that no special attention has been given to this scheme in the blocks by way of either special staff or regular publicity through radio or press.

**Suggestions for effective implementation of crop yield competition:** The present size of competition plot fixed was found to be satisfactory and could continue under the scheme. The majority of the respondents had suggested the supply of inputs to the competitors at subsidised rate. Extension workers were not in favour of organising separate competitions for medium and high status farmers. Majority of the respondents suggested to have some consolation prize. It was also suggested that only the first six competitors who got maximum yields in the State level



Table 2. Administrative difficulties encountered in implementing crop yield competition,

Administrative difficulties	Agrl. Extn. Officers (n=28)		Dist. Agrl. Officers (n=27)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Belated receipt of targets and instructions to continue the scheme	1	3.57	—	—
Lack of adequate staff	—	—	1	3.70
Superiors fix the targets without consulting Agricultural Extension Officers	2	7.14	—	—
Village level workers are not cooperating in achieving the targets	2	7.14	—	—
Delayed declaration of prize winners results in withdrawal of farmers from competition during subsequent seasons	2	7.14	—	—
Fixing time limit is an hindrance for implementation	—	—	2	7.40
Targets are not fixed with reference to the area	3	10.71	—	—
Complicated procedure in conducting the scheme	4	14.28	—	—
Judging committee members are not available on the harvest date	6	21.42	9	33.33
Difficulty in getting prescribed entrance fee	6	21.42	—	—
Agricultural Extension Officers are overburdened with multifarious activities. Hence they are unable to bestow best attention to crop yield competition	20	71.43	3	11.11
Others	—	—	3	11.11

Note : Multiple responses are taken and so, the percentage if added up may not be 100



Table 3. Administrative difficulties in giving publicity to crop yield competition

Administrative difficulty in giving publicity	Agricultural Extn. Officers (n=28)		Dist. Agrl. Officers (n=27)	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
No difficulties	—	—	19	70.37
Lack of time to educate the farmers	4	14.28	1	3.70
Other difficulties	4	14.28	1	3.70
Lack of radio and press support	5	17.85	—	—
Inadequate supply of literature	11	39.28	3	11.11
Inadequate staff to give publicity	26	92.85	8	28.62

Note : Multiple responses are taken and so the percentage if added up may not be 100

competition should be allowed to compete for National level competition.

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