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Promoting ICT to Access Agriculture Market Information among Rural Youth

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Background

- Low returns from agriculture may be one factor discouraging youth from participating in the sector.
- Lack of access to agricultural market information has been listed as one of the reasons for low returns.
- Hence, the need for producers to be able to locate potential buyers with high purchasing power.
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) can provide;
 - agricultural market information;
 - raise returns;
 - attract more youth;
 - reduce unemployment; and
 - promote rural development.

Determinants of ICT use by farmers

- Stereotype was found to negatively affect women's intention to use ICT.
- The influence of the perception on the value received from using phones to find market information was stronger for females than male farmers.
- Performance expectancy
- Effort expectancy
- Value of ICT exceeds cost
- ICT must offer information that is accurate, credible, and reliable.
- ICT must be able to help access useful agricultural market information.
- Network service access.



Uses of ICT

- ICT can help farmers access market information.
- Producers can use their phones to post offers to sell.
- They can use their phones to learn bid prices in different markets.
- However, previous studies suggest that most farmers use ICT mainly for social purposes.

Recommendations

- While planning for promoting ICT among young farmers there is no need to put much consideration on gender issues.
- Young rural Tanzanians want to use ICT for agricultural market information - if it works.
- Young Tanzanians are more amenable to adopting the cell phone technologies that they believe will be easier to use.

- For widespread adoption of cell phone ICT by young farmers to access market information, there must be network service access.
- Studies should be conducted using bottom-up approach by the policy makers in order to know what type of interventions are required by the youths and not just setting up a programme that doesn't meet their needs.
- Create an enabling and favourable market for the youth.
- The government can reap the full benefit of N-Power Agro programme by incorporating the beneficiaries into the Home-grown school feeding programme to supply the foods instead of the middlemen they currently use.
- They should also revamp the moribund farm settlement scheme for the youths.

