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LISTENERSHIP OF BAMBOU 89.3 FM AGRICULTURAL BROADCASTS AMONG RURAL FARMERS IN FARANAH PREFECTURE OF GUINEA CONAKRY

Badiru, I. O., Bangaly, T. and Ladigbolu, T. A.

Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

Correspondence contact details: adejojutemitope@gmail.com; bodebadru@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

To boost Guinean agriculture that is undermined by inadequate infrastructure, untimely or lack of information, inaccessibility to extension services and technologies, Bambou FM produced some agricultural programmes targeting rural farmers. This study investigated the listenership of these agricultural broadcasts by rural farmers. A two-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting 143 rural farmers in Faranah prefecture, Guinea Conakry. Data were collected on respondents' listening pattern, perception about agricultural broadcasts and constraints to listening to agricultural information on Bambou FM. It also tested for relationships between rural farmers' perception, constraints and listenership of agricultural broadcast on Bambou FM. Data were collected with the aid of interview schedule and analysed using frequency counts, percentages and PPMC at $\alpha 0.05$. Majority (76.9%) always listened to agricultural broadcast on Bambou FM via mobile phones (59.4%), at home (58.7%) while 43.6% spent more than 3 hours daily listening. They frequently listened (86.7%) to agricultural broadcasts "L'Emission Interactive des Producteurs" {EIP} with a high (54.5%) level of listenership. Perception of the agricultural broadcasts was favourable (56.6%) and irregular power supply (86.0%) was the major constraint limiting listenership of agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM. Perception of the agricultural broadcast ($r = 0.174$) and constraints to listening and accessing information ($r = 0.058$) were significantly related to listenership of the broadcast. Conclusively, agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM enjoyed wide listenership among rural farmers of Faranah prefecture, still sustainability is key, therefore, rural infrastructure need to be improved on by government while development communicators need to target listeners' primetime and avoid repetition.

Keywords: Guinea Conakry, Listenership, Bambou FM, Agricultural broadcast, Rural farmers

INTRODUCTION

Guinean agriculture has potentials to create sustainable jobs, ensure food self-sufficiency of the population of over 10 million people, to generate significant export earnings (particularly through cash crops) and to pave way for profitable and valuable investments (Infoasaid (2011). Yet it is heavily dependent on importations of staple foods, especially rice. The reasons are evident in the fact that these potentials are yet to be fully materialised. Guinean agricultural production is still insufficient for consumption of the populace aside exportation, therefore each year, the government invests so much money to import food items. Farmers largely practice subsistence agriculture, growing small plots of land to feed their families and very little for sales. Subsistence production on the other hand, inadequate infrastructure, lack of information, lack of access to agricultural extension services and technologies all undermine the potentiality of Guinean agriculture, (FAO 2009). Agriculture has always been a highly knowledge-intensive sector requiring continuous information flow. Farmers' quest for authentic, credible and usable information both from established systems and traditional practices is ever increasing in this fluctuating global environment, to operate efficiently and compete economically. The rapid changes happening around with World Trade Organisation/globalisation, uncontrolled urbanisation, uncertainty in climate change, discerning consumer segment and continued farm crisis emphasise the importance of timely, appropriate and need based information and knowledge to meet myriads of developmental

challenges. Although, the Guinean government in its efforts towards agricultural development in recent years has invested heavily in agriculture by purchasing agricultural inputs to boost agricultural production, however, this cannot be fully achieved without investment on agricultural extension services.

Effective extension, education and communication services are one of the key strategies to alleviate these challenges, to sustaining agricultural growth, strengthening food security and combating hunger and malnutrition. Agricultural extension is the vehicle or system for delivering useful information to farmers and assisting farmers to develop requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes making use of various information technologies. In recent times, advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are revolutionizing agriculture extension by offering various technological options such as television, radio, internet and mobile phones of which radio stands out among others for generations. Historically, radio has been part of the old information and communication technologies as opposed to new technologies such as computers, cell phones and the internet (AMARC, 2015). Radio is everywhere, with at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the households in developing countries having access to radio (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2012). According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report, (2012), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) submitted that there are about four hundred and forty (440,000) radio stations worldwide. Hence, it has become part of the people's lifestyle



for a long time and plays a huge role in human development. It can also be used for the mobilisation of the populace for propagating political, social, economic and agricultural agenda for national development, (UNESCO, 2007). Probably because radio listeners use and relate to radio in a very different way when compared to other media.

Radio is the most common medium for disseminating information to the public and the dominant form of mass communication in Guinea. There are about 23 community stations run by Guinean government called Radio Rurale with at least 17 private radio stations established across Guinea since 2006. One of such is Bambou 89.3 FM in Faranah Guinea. The Guinean women's rights NGO Coalition Nationale de Guinee pour les Droits et la Citoyennete des Femmes (CONAG-DCF) (the National Coalition of Guinea for Women's Rights and Citizenship) runs this community radio station in Faranah in south central Guinea. Since inception the station has aired numerous broadcasts ranging from women's programme, children's programme, education, entertainment, social as well as agricultural programmes. However, the diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, poor infrastructure, low levels of literacy, linguistic barriers, tight government's control of the media, geographical remoteness widespread poverty, and differential incentives make the task of information dissemination on radio challenging.

Listenership of a particular radio can be viewed in several ways; from coverage of that radio station, frequency of listening to broadcast from such radio station and listening pattern. All these coupled with type of broadcast contents and programme formats will all enhance listenership. As listeners; adults, old, young, male and female tend to be loyal to their favourite stations provided these enhancers are put in place anytime they tune in to the station (Ismaila, 2013). Importantly, listening to such radio programme while doing other tasks (farming, driving, chores, housework) either on their own or in the presence of other people is an added advantage, (Radio Advertising Bureau, 2013). However, it is noteworthy that although citizens may listen to radio as a group, they usually have their own personal opinions which may or may not be shared with other people. Ladigbolu, Ladele and Badiru, (2014) affirmed that people will listen to a radio station or radio programme that has good content to offer, and their interest will be aroused by presenting the programmes using different formats. In the same vein, it is expected that agricultural broadcasts aired on Bambou 89.3 FM be well received among the listeners, rural farmers. This would enable the farmers to continue to listen to the programmes, if they are beneficial and, in the formats, enticing and fascinating to them. This possibly explains why individuals have preferences

amongst the radio stations as well as radio broadcasts at their disposal.

Several studies have been carried out to assess the development of Guinean agriculture but none of them mentioned the involvement of community radio in the development process, (Nadège 2016). Therefore, in order to effectively study the role of community radios in the development of agriculture in Guinea, there is need for baseline information on the listenership of existing agricultural programmes. Hence, this study investigated the listenership of Bambou 89.3 FM agricultural broadcasts among rural farmers in Faranah Prefecture, Guinea Conakry. It is in this context that this study attempted to answer the following research questions which translated to the specific objectives:

1. What is the listening pattern to agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM by rural farmers'?
2. What is the frequency of listening to the agricultural broadcast on Bambou FM by the respondents'?
3. What is the perception of rural farmers about agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM?
4. What are the constraints to listening and accessing agricultural information on Bambou FM?
5. What is the relationship between rural farmers' perception and listenership of agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM?
6. What is the relationship between rural farmers' constraints to listening to agricultural information and listenership of agricultural broadcasts on Bambou Fm?

METHODOLOGY

Prefecture of Faranah in Guinea Conakry was the study area, located between 10° 02' and 10° 10' North latitude; 10° 42' and 11° 50' West longitude at an average altitude of 340m (Figure 1). It covers an area of 13,000 km² for a population of 211,115 inhabitants. There are eleven rural communities (Banian, Bendou, Hèrèmakono, Nialya, Songoya, Tiro, Tindö, Marella, Passaya, Sandénia, and Kobikörö) with an urban community. The relief of Faranah is little varied and is presented as a vast monotonous plateau, cut by large plains and dotted with hills. The city of Faranah homes several quarters, mosques and two radio stations, a government radio station that operates throughout the day and community radio station that has a shorter operating time (Ly, 2017). Bambou Fm is the community owned radio station. There are three major agricultural programmes on the radio station, namely, Interactive Emission of the Producer (EIP) Broadcast, Emission of Vegetable Crops (EVC) Broadcast and Dispute between Farmers and Major Breeders Broadcast.

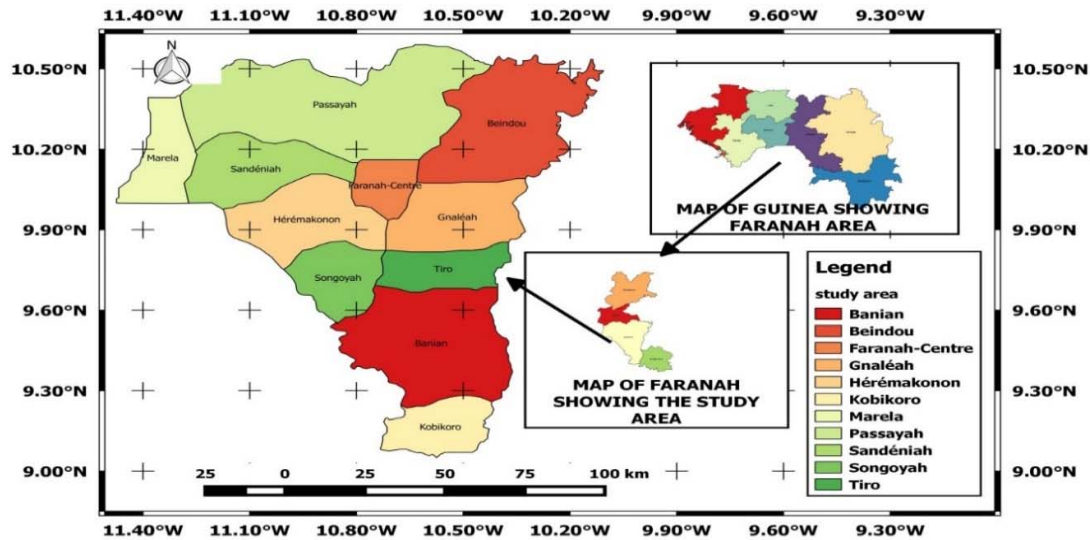


Figure 1: Map of Faranah showing the study location

The study population of this study comprised all farmers from all agricultural groups in Faranah prefecture. They were selected using a two-stage sampling procedure. At first, fifty percent of 10 agricultural groups in Faranah prefecture were randomly selected to give a total of five groups using simple random sampling technique. There are a total number of 1,650 registered farmers from all the selected agricultural groups. In the second stage, 10% each of registered farmers from each of the selected group were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique. Based on the list of registered farmers, 41, 35, 32, 31 and 26 registered farmers (from the five selected groups) were sampled to give a total sample size of 165. However, 143 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved from the respondents making it a recovery rate of 88.6%.

Data were collected on respondents' listening pattern, listening frequency and extent of listening to agricultural broadcast on Bambou FM. Also, data were obtained on perception of agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM as well as constraints to listening and accessing agricultural information on the station. The relationship between rural farmers' perception, constraints and listenership of agricultural broadcast on Bambou FM was also tested. A well-structured interview schedule and questionnaire were used as instruments to collect data from the respondents based on their literacy level.

To measure rural farmers' listening pattern to agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM, respondents were asked to attempt several questions to indicate if they actually listen to both Bambou FM and the agricultural broadcasts. To state the way, medium, place and time of listening to the broadcast. Response options were provided based on the rendition and level of measurement of the questions

asked, scores were assigned accordingly to the response options. Respondents' frequency of listening to the agricultural broadcast on Bambou FM was assessed to determine the regularity at which respondent listen to the three major programmes. Respondents were asked to state how often they listen to the individual agricultural broadcast on Bambou FM. Response options of 'Always', 'Rarely' and 'Never' were provided and scores of 2, 1 and 0 were assigned respectively. Mean and standard deviation scores were determined for each of the agricultural broadcast to identify the broadcast with highest listening frequency in term of regularity. Meanwhile, level of listenership of agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM was derived from listening pattern and frequency of listening to agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM. First off, all the three variables; listening pattern and frequency of listening to agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM were standardized using the Z scores. The minimum and maximum scores obtained were 1 and 9, respectively. A mean score of 5.3 ± 2.3 was also obtained and used to categorise level of listenership as low (<5.3) and high (≥ 5.3). Then the indices generated were categorised into high and low level of listenership of agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM, using mean as the benchmark.

Six perception statements consisting of both positive and negative items were woven around, benefits derived from the content, programme formats, feedback mechanisms, presentation language and time. Respondents were provided with response options of 'Strongly Agree' (SA), 'Agree' (A), 'Undecided' (U), 'Disagree' (D) and 'Strongly Disagree' (SD). The same questions and response options were presented for all the three agricultural broadcast on Bambou FM individually.



Scores of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 were assigned for positively worded statements, while the reverse was the case for negatively worded statements. The minimum and maximum scores obtained were 43 and 76, respectively. A composite score of perception index was calculated while, mean score of 61.7 ± 6.3 was obtained and used to categorise respondents into unfavourable (< 61.7) and favourable perception (≥ 61.7)

To measure respondents' constraints to listening and accessing agricultural information on Bambou FM. A list of ten constraint items were provided with response options of 'Yes or No' while scores of 1 and 0 were assigned respectively. The percentage distribution was used to rank each of the constraints in order of severity. Each item was pooled to generate a composite score of constraints index which was used to test the hypothesis.

Data retrieved were analysed with the aid of descriptive statistics tools (percentages, mean and frequency distribution) while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used for inferential statistics at $\alpha 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents (99.3%) listened to Bambou FM and agricultural programmes on the station respectively. A larger percentage (59.4%) of the respondents

indicated that they listened via mobile phones, 35.7% through radio sets, while 4.9 % listened through transistor both radio and mobile phones. This implies and confirms that radio, an old form of transmitting and receiving message is still in use, especially now that it can be accessed on mobile phones. Farmers can easily obtain useful information about agricultural issues, problems and its usage, market price, weather conditions, pest and disease management strategies for the development of agriculture. This result is consistent with the findings of Sousa, Nicolay and Home (2016) who posited that rural farmers in Mali accessed radio and video programs via mobile phones.

Results in Table 1 also show that 43.6% of the respondents spent more than 3 hours weekly listening to agricultural programmes on Bambou FM with 39.2% spending 3 hours and only 15.4% spent 2 hours on a weekly basis listening to agricultural programmes being aired on Bambou FM. While more than half (58.7%) of the respondents listened to agricultural programmes on Bambou FM in their respective homes, 29.4% listened both at home and workplace and just 11.9% listened in their workplace. This indicates the flexibility, immediacy, immense potential and capacity of the radio to put out the programmes that caters for the needs of rural masses regardless of their locations.

Table 1: Distribution of rural farmers' listening pattern to agricultural broadcasts on Bambou Fm

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Do you listen to Bambou FM?	Yes	142	99.3
	No	1	0.7
Medium of listening to Bambou FM?	I listen on mobile phone	85	59.4
	I listen on transistor radio	51	35.7
	I listen on both gadgets	7	4.9
Do you listen to agric programmes on Bambou FM	Yes	142	99.3
	No	1	0.7
Time spent per day listening to agric. broadcast on Bambou FM	1 hour	3	2.1
	2 hours	22	15.4
	3 hours	56	39.2
	More than 3 hours	62	43.6
Place of listening to agric. Programmes	At home	84	58.7
	At work	17	11.9
	Anywhere	42	29.4
Total		143	100

On frequency of listening to agricultural programmes transmitted on Bambou FM, Table 2 reveals that "L'Emission Interactive des Producteurs" (Interactive Emission of the Producer Broadcast) {EIP} was the most frequently listened to programme with a mean score of 1.86 ± 0.74 . This is immediately followed by "Emission des Cultures Vervieres" (Emission of Vegetable Crops Broadcast) {ECV} (1.52 ± 0.74) and Dispute between Farmers and Major Breeders Broadcast (0.72 ± 0.77). Similarly, on the extent of listenership of agricultural programme as revealed in Table 3

EIP broadcast was to a larger extent listened to among the three programmes with a mean score of 2.30 ± 0.67 . This was closely followed by ECV (1.91 ± 1.04) and Dispute between Farmers and Major Breeders broadcasts (0.72 ± 0.77). The implications of these results could be attributed to so many factors such as programme formats and content of the broadcast. Specifically, it could be directed at the feedback obtained by listeners to EIP broadcast due to its encompassing nature particularly when calls are made in such live broadcast.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by frequency of listening to agricultural programmes on Bambou Fm

Frequency of listening	Always (Above half time)	Rarely (A little less than half time)	Never	Mean±SD
Interactive Emission of the Producer (EIP) Broadcast	86.7	12.6	0.7	1.86±0.74
Emission of Vegetable Crops (EVC) Broadcast	67.1	18.2	14.7	1.52±0.74
Dispute between Farmers and Major Breeders Broadcast	19.6	32.1	48.3	0.72±0.77

Source: Field survey, 2019

Generally on listenership, Table 3 shows that more than half (54.5%) of the respondents recorded a high level of listenership of agricultural programmes on Bambou FM. This further reiterates that farmers really listened to agricultural programmes on Bambou FM in Guinea. This could probably be

because of the wide coverage or benefits farmers derived from these agricultural broadcasts. This finding corroborates earlier work by Yahaya and Badiru (2002) who reported a high rate of listenership of radio broadcast among rural dwellers in Southwestern, Nigeria.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by level of listenership to agricultural programmes on Bambou FM

Level of listenership	Freq.	%	Minimum value	Maximum value	Mean
Low (1.0-5.2)	65	45.5	1	9	5.3±2.3
High (5.3-9.0)	78	54.5			

Source: Field survey, 2019

Table 4 reveals that 86.0% of the respondents reported irregular power supply as a major challenge to accessing agricultural programmes on Bambou FM. The problem of irregular power could affect access to information on radio broadcast, especially in a situation where farmers derive radio facility from their radio set using electricity or listen via mobile phones. In such instances, farmers may not have the ability of to get their phones charged nor use the electric radio, therefore hindering listening. This finding aligns with Syeda (2018) that the problem of erratic power

supply often hinders farmers' access to agricultural programmes aired via radio. Other challenges limiting farmers' access to agricultural broadcast on Bambou FM are adverse broadcast time (53.8%) and repetition of subject matter (50.3%) as well as lack of knowledge of resource person on subject matter (45.5%). However, language barrier (22.4%) and poor signal (14.7%) were the least constraints in the study area. This suggests that farmers in this study get clear transmission of agricultural programmes and understand the information transmitted via the radio.

Table 4: Distribution rural famers based on constraints to listening and accessing agricultural information on Bambou Fm

Constraints	Percentage	Rank
Irregular power supply	86.0	1st
Adverse broadcast time	53.8	2 nd
Repetition of subjects or monotony	50.3	3 rd
Lack of knowledge of resource persons on the subject matter	45.5	4 th
Unnecessary interludes	44.1	5 th
Unpleasant voice of the presenter	43.4	6 th
Irrelevant topics to the season of current agricultural activities	39.9	7 th
Low opportunity for feedback	35.0	8 th
Language barrier	22.4	9 th
Poor signal	14.7	10 th

Source: Field survey, 2019

Table 5 reveals that majority (51.0%) of listeners of Dispute between Farmers and Major Breeders broadcast strongly agreed that agricultural programme of the radio station provides them with enormous benefits they need for their works on the farm. In the same vein, a high percentage (44.8%) of

listeners of EVC broadcast strongly agreed that time of broadcast was not conducive. More than half (56.6%) of EIP broadcast listeners agreed strongly that the programme has good feedback mechanism. This could probably explain why EIP broadcast was



the most frequently listened to programme among the three.

Overall, majority (56.6%) of the farmers had a favourable perception about the agricultural

programmes on Bambou FM. It can be inferred from this finding that farmers in Faranah prefecture had more favourable disposition to agricultural programme on EIP.

Table 5: Distribution of rural farmers' perception about agricultural broadcasts on Bambou FM

Perception statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
Dispute between Farmers and Major Breeders Broadcast					
The agricultural programme of the radio station provides me with enormous benefits needed for my work on the farm	51.0	32.9	9.8	2.1	4.2
The programme is usually presented in an interesting way (formats)	30.8	2.8	4.9	16.8	19.6
The time of broadcast of the program is not conducive to listening.	40.6	34.3	14.0	6.3	4.9
The language of presentation of the programme must be in our official language	6.3	4.9	7.7	30.8	50.3
The program does not provide me with the information I need for my farm work	14.0	14.0	3.5	21.7	46.9
The programme has good feedback mechanism	28.0	18.2	3.5	25.9	24.5
Emission of Vegetable Crops (EVC) Broadcast					
The agricultural programme of the radio station provides me with enormous benefits needed for my work on the farm	21.0	22.4	18.2	15.4	23.1
The programme is usually presented in an interesting way (formats)	8.4	6.3	10.5	26.6	48.3
The time of broadcast of the programme is not conducive to listening.	44.8	31.5	11.9	2.1	9.8
The language of presentation of the programme must be in our official language	39.8	21.7	10.5	15.4	12.6
The programme does not provide me with the information I needed for my farm work	34.3	16.1	9.1	11.9	28.7
The programme has good feedback mechanism	29.4	20.3	3.5	24.5	22.4
Interactive Emission of the Producer (EIP) Broadcast					
The agricultural programme of the radio station provides me with enormous benefits needed for my work on the farm	29.4	35.7	16.1	5.6	13.3
The programme is usually presented in an interesting way (formats)	23.8	25.2	14.0	7.7	29.4
The time of broadcast of the programme is not conducive to listening.	28.7	17.5	13.3	23.1	17.5
The language of presentation of the programme must be in our official language	9.1	9.1	2.1	9.8	69.9
The programme does not provide me with the information I needed for my farm work	46.2	37.8	4.9	4.2	7.0
The programme has good feedback mechanism	56.6	35.7	2.1	2.8	2.8
Overall perception					
	Freq.	%	Min. value	Max. value	Mean
Unfavourable (38-55.1)	62	43.4	38	70	55.2±6.2
Favourable (55.2-70.0)	81	56.6			

Results in Table 6 shows that respondents' perception of agricultural programmes on Bambou FM was significantly related to level of listenership ($r = 0.174$, $p = 0.037$) at 0.05 level. However, there was no significant relationship between respondents' constraints to accessing agricultural programmes on Bambou FM and their level of listenership of agricultural programmes ($r = 0.058$, $p > 0.491$) on Bambou FM. The positive correlation between respondents' perception of agricultural programme on Bambou FM and level of listenership implies that the more favourable disposed respondents are towards these programmes, the more they will listen to agricultural programmes on

Bambou FM. This could probably be due to the fact that these programmes are related to their farm enterprise, hence the benefits derived was much and ultimately stimulating their level of listenership consistently. The non-significant correlation implies that the constraints faced by respondents in accessing agricultural program on Bambou FM does not reduce their level of listenership significantly. It could be that farmers in the study area device means or measure to get rid of challenges that may hinder them from listening to agricultural programmes on the station. However, this does not mean that the challenges must not be checked because very severe constraints could pose a problem in the future.

Table 6: Relationship between rural farmers’ perception, constraints to listening and accessing and agricultural information and listenership of agricultural broadcasts on Bambou Fm

Variables	r	p-value
Perception*listenership	0.174	0.037***
Constraints*listenership	0.058	0.491

Source: Field survey, 2019 *** Significant

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that most of the respondents listened to Bambou FM and agricultural broadcasts on the station. Most of them listened to the programme via their mobile phones and transistor radio sets. Most had a favourable perception of agricultural programmes aired on Bambou FM as it provided them with the information needed and good the needed feedback. This further reflected in a high level of listenership of agricultural programmes on Bambou FM. However, irregular power supply, adverse broadcast time and repetition of subject matters were major constraints limiting farmers’ listening and accessing agricultural information on the station.

Therefore, since listenership was high, it is crucial that corporate bodies, government and non-governmental agencies make information readily, timely and accessible to farmers using radio. Sponsorship of agricultural programmes on radio is also important for sustenance of these programmes. Farming households in Guinea accessed radio mostly as their major source of information for technologies adoption. “Emission des Cultures Vervieres” (Emission of Vegetable Crops broadcast) {ECV} and Dispute between Farmers and Major Breeders broadcast should be reviewed and repackage in a similar way that “L’Emission Interactive des Producteurs” (Interactive Emission of the Producer Broadcast) {EIP} was to enhance listenership. Listenership of agricultural programmes can also be enhanced by addressing the issues of irregular power supply, adverse broadcast time and repetition of subject matters.

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