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AGRICULTURAL CHANGE IN TROPICAL AFRICA

Kenneth R.M. Anthony, Bruce F. Johnston,
William O. Jones, and Victor C. Uchendu

In this book, two economists, an anthropologist, and an agronomist examine African small-holder farming to determine how agricultural productivity might be increased. The authors, all of whom have had long experience in tropical Africa, consider the place of agriculture in the national economy, the historical background of current problems, and the nature of cultural change. The monograph is based on seven field studies carried out in five African countries in addition to the general literature on economic, technical, and social change in sub-Saharan Africa.

The discussion focuses on the role of the market, the varieties of African responses to changes in the economic order, and the quality of agricultural research in Africa and of the communications between research stations and farmers. A principal factor that inhibits productivity on small farms is found to be ignorance of the nature of existing farm systems on the part of government policy makers. This has resulted in lack of simple yield-increasing innovations, insufficient expenditure on agricultural research, government interference in product and input markets, and inadequate national capacity for produce marketing and spatial arbitrage.

The book will be of great value to agricultural and development economists and to those with a special interest in tropical Africa.

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