



Empowering Agriculture through Advisory (Extension) Services

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Advisory Services serves as a term often used interchangeably with "extension services." These systems encompass a wide range of market and non-market entities, with agents tasked to deliver valuable technical information regarding innovative technologies that have the potential to enhance the livelihoods and income of farmers and rural communities.

Agricultural advisory (extension) services represent a crucial component within the diverse landscape of market and non-market entities and agents, offering vital information flows capable of enhancing the well-being of farmers and rural populations. Following a period of relative neglect, agricultural advisory services have once again gained prominence on the international development agenda.

In addition to their traditional role of providing knowledge aimed at boosting agricultural productivity, agricultural advisory services are now expected to serve a multitude of new functions. These include establishing connections between smallholder farmers and high-value and export markets, advocating for environmentally sustainable production methods, and addressing the challenges posed by diseases and other health-related issues affecting the agricultural sector.

Role of ICAR in Advisory Services

1. **ICAR's Pioneering Initiatives in Agricultural Extension:** Over the years, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has been at the forefront of numerous extension programs. The inaugural program, the National Demonstration Scheme, was launched in 1964. It aimed to showcase the production potential of major crops directly in farmers' fields. In 1975, the Operational Research Projects (ORPs) were initiated to identify and address technological and socio-economic constraints. These projects were focused on devising problem-solving technology modules within specific operational areas, watersheds, and for particular target groups. In 1979, ICAR introduced the Lab-to-Land program, dedicated to transferring cost-effective technologies in agriculture and related sectors. As part of the broader technology mission for oilseeds and pulses, the council commenced Frontline demonstrations in 1990-91. The Institution-Village Linkage Programme, launched in 1995 and funded under the National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) from 1998 to 2004, furthered the mission to strengthen the connection between research institutions and rural communities. Under the innovation technology demonstration component of NATP, ICAR established Agriculture-Technology Information Centres (ATIC) in State Agricultural Universities. These ATICs serve as single-window support systems, bridging the gap between research institutions, intermediary users, and farmers. They provide access to technology inputs, products, information, and advisory services, all under one roof. Since 2006-07, ICAR has been

actively involved in the implementation of the National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) in a consortium-based approach.

2. **KVKs: Empowering Agriculture at Grassroots:** The Knowledge Hub Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) is a pioneering institution under ICAR, established at the district level. The first KVK was founded in 1974 and has since evolved into the largest network in the country, boasting 722 KVKs as of 2020-2021. These KVKs are financially supported by ICAR and are administered by ICAR institutes, State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), Deemed Universities, Non-government Organizations, or State Departments of Agriculture. KVKs play a pivotal role in conducting on-farm tests to identify location-specific agricultural technologies. They also demonstrate the production potential of crops directly in farmers' fields through frontline demonstrations. Furthermore, KVKs organize need-based training programs for farmers, farm women, rural youth, and extension personnel to enhance their knowledge and skills in cutting-edge technology areas. These Knowledge Hubs raise awareness about improved agricultural technologies through a wide array of extension programs. Additionally, they contribute to the production of critical and quality inputs, such as seeds, planting materials, organic products, biofertilizers, and various livestock strains, all of which are made available to farmers. Agricultural Knowledge and Resource Centres are established within KVKs to support the initiatives of public, private, and voluntary sectors at the district level. Over time, KVKs have successfully implemented various technological and institutional interventions, leading to numerous case studies of their effective impact. KVKs are gradually evolving into grassroots-level institutions that empower the farming community. They have played a significant role in decentralized planning and implementation, contributing to the growth of agriculture and allied sectors. Studies, conducted by both internal and external agencies at various points in time, have demonstrated the substantial contribution of KVKs in educating farmers about improved practices and elevating productivity levels.
3. **SAU's Innovative Advisory Service Outreach:** In addition to their support for ICAR-sponsored extension programs, State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) have pioneered several innovative extension models to effectively engage with the farming community. The nature of extension activities conducted by SAUs varies from state to state. SAUs play a pivotal role in transferring agricultural technologies to farmers and other stakeholders through a diverse range of extension initiatives. These activities are organized through various means, such as Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Extension Education Units, Farmers Training Institutes, Bakery Training Units, Staff Training Units, and Agriculture Technology Information Centres. These diversified extension educational activities encompass activities like farm trials, demonstrations, meetings, discussions, conventions, training programs, farmers' field schools, field days, agricultural exhibitions, campaigns, educational tours, exposure visits, diagnostic visits, and farm advisory services. SAUs also publish agricultural literature, including books, package of practices, booklets, folders, and leaflets in local languages to facilitate the dissemination of agricultural technologies to both farmers and extension personnel. Expert Centers and Village Resource Centers, established in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), provide a platform for farmers to interact with experts on a wide range of agricultural information. To ensure timely access to agricultural technologies, weather data, and market information, SAUs utilize mobile messaging services and run Kissan Call Centers. Additionally, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) play a vital role in providing the farming community with up-to-date information and guidance.
4. **Role of SVUs in Advisory Services:** The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and various Agricultural Universities (AUs), including Veterinary and Animal

Science/Fisheries Science Universities across different agro-ecological zones in the country, have significantly contributed to the transformation of the livestock production landscape. Their contributions are a result of continuous animal health research, education, and extension services facilitated by skilled professionals produced by these institutions.

As the livestock sector continues to diversify, the responsibilities of veterinarians have become increasingly challenging. State Veterinary Universities are tasked with providing education across various branches of Veterinary, Animal, and Fishery sciences. These institutions are also actively involved in conducting research and extension activities aimed at benefiting the rural populace within their respective states. Their efforts encompass a wide range of activities, including the promotion of research, field programs, and extension initiatives. Additionally, they focus on enhancing production, post-harvest technology, as well as processing and marketing within the realm of Veterinary, Animal, and Fishery Sciences.

Mission: Charting the Future of Agricultural Advisory Services

- Fostering the development of a proficient workforce in Veterinary, Animal, Poultry, Dairy, and Fishery Sciences.
- Engaging in fundamental research in cutting-edge fields of Animal and Veterinary Science, aimed at producing high-performing animals and innovative diagnostic and preventive solutions.
- Enriching the knowledge base of livestock and livestock product management for the benefit of farmers in the state, thereby nurturing entrepreneurial skills among livestock farmers not only locally but also across the nation.