

Market-oriented farm management for trainers of extension workers

TRAINING
MATERIALS FOR
AGRICULTURAL
MANAGEMENT,
MARKETING
AND FINANCE

6

AFRICA



Module 1 GETTING STARTED



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farm management
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Module 1
GETTING STARTED

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GETTING STARTED

We are now beginning a training programme on market-oriented farm management in Africa. The purpose is to better equip extension workers in their efforts to help farmers improve the profitability of their farms. The approach is interactive, learning based and designed to help professional extension workers support smallholder farmers who are beginning to sell, or already are selling, produce in the market. The aim is to increase the capability of farmers to manage their farms more effectively. Module 1 is intended to set the learning foundation for the duration of this programme.

Getting to know one another

The purpose of this session is to create unity among the participants and put them at ease with one another. It will also help to build participatory skills in preparation for the shared learning experiences that are to be presented throughout this programme. During this session you as facilitator should inform the participants of the name you wish to be called throughout the training programme.

Opening statement

Let us take a bit of time at this first session to introduce ourselves to one another as we prepare to work and learn together. We as a group already know that the goal of this programme is to better equip extension workers to help farmers improve farm profitability. The scope of this course covers a great deal of material that will involve considerable effort. However, it has been planned to provide not only an enjoyable experience but one that is rewarding and profitable. So, let us start by doing Exercise 1.1A (Me and my future). This will give us an opportunity to get to know one another and to help us build a shared vision regarding this programme.

Exercise 1.1A

Me and my future

- Purpose:** To help participants get to know one another and to practise drawing and communication skills.
- Method:** Pictorial representation, interviewing.
- Materials:** Give each participant: (i) an A1 sheet of paper (flip chart paper/newsprint), (ii) several thick coloured marking pens (preferably not black), (iii) Handout 1.1A (Me and my future).

Allow 15–20 minutes time for this exercise

Note

For this exercise the participants should work in pairs. If there are, say, 12 participants, have them count off from 1 to 6 two times, form two lines and pair the 1s with the 1s and the 2s with the 2s. If there is an odd number of participants, the facilitator or a visitor may have to pair off with one of them.

Procedure

1. For this exercise the participants should work in pairs.
2. Ask each pair of participants to write their assigned number (pair 1, pair 2, ...) in bold letters on the paper and the name by which each would like to be known throughout the programme.
3. Have all the participants draw an image of themselves.

Exercise 1.1A (continued)

4. Then have each participant draw a river from their image to the vision of their own future. The river should pass by 'stepping stones' of progress towards that future. The stepping stones should be identified with a picture. Similarly, the end vision should also be indicated by a picture of the participant in the future. Have the class refer to the example in Handout 1.1A.

Note

Reassure the participants that the quality of their drawing is not important (they should not use words, but only pictures).

5. When the participants have finished their drawings, pair them off. All participants should give their drawings to their partners and explain the meaning of the story.
6. Arrange the group with the pairs near each other. Have the partners exchange drawings so that each group is given the drawing of the other.
7. One by one, ask each pair to stand and to introduce their partner by showing the drawing and telling the story.

Note

The facilitator should also do this exercise, either alone or with one of the participants.



Diagram — Me and my future



Building a shared vision

The purpose of this session is to set the ground rules for the course, identify expectations and concerns, and develop a common understanding about the process and outcomes of the programme. In addition, a study of the Programme guidelines, followed by an exercise of questions and answers, will help to create unity of vision among the participants and outline the basic conceptual framework to be used throughout.

Opening statement

We all come to a programme such as this with a number of expectations and concerns.

In this session we shall discuss these in order to alleviate the worries that any of us may have. We shall also begin to build participatory skills.

Study of the Programme guidelines will help to clarify the process, content and outcomes.

Exercise introduction

Now let us begin by spending some time to agree on how we shall conduct this programme. Exercise 1.2A (Establish ground rules) will help us to formulate and use rules that will govern the group throughout the training programme.

Exercise 1.2A

Establish ground rules

Purpose: To ensure that we all agree on the rules and commit ourselves to putting them into practice.

Method: Group discussion.

Materials: Two flip chart papers marked: (i) "Accepted ground rules", (ii) "Maybe ground rules".

Allow 15 minutes for this exercise

Procedure

1. Ask the participants to suggest useful ground rules to govern the way the programme runs and the way the participants behave toward each other. They should suggest rules they think would benefit group cohesion and unity.

For example: no interrupting while someone is talking.

2. As each suggestion is made, ask the group if they are happy for it to become a ground rule. If there is general agreement, then write it on the flip chart labelled "Accepted ground rules". If there is no general agreement, but some agreement, write it on the flip chart labelled "Maybe ground rules".
3. The facilitator should make sure that the following ground rules are included: (i) keep to the timetable, (ii) respect one another, (iii) criticize ideas, not people, (iv) speak simply and to the point, (v) be trustworthy.
4. When the list of ground rules is completed, post it on the wall where it can be seen and referred to during the programme. Ground rules should be reviewed from time to time, to see how well the group is doing in following them and to allow for changes that may be necessary.
5. Once the ground rules have been established, attend to "housekeeping" issues that include items such as confirmation of the daily timetable, accommodation, meals and clean-up.

Exercise introduction

As we have already discussed, trainers and participants alike have expectations and worries about programmes such as this. We each have concerns about the programme and hope to get something out of it as well. In Exercise 1.2B (Clarifying expectations and worries) we shall identify and record our concerns. At the end of the programme, we can revisit them to see if our expectations were met or if our worries came true.

Exercise 1.2B

Clarifying expectations and worries

Purpose: To identify and address participants' concerns.

Method: Group interaction.

Materials: (i) a thick dark marking pen and five A5 sheets of paper for each participant, (ii) a box at the front of the room labelled: "Worries", (iii) three sheets of newsprint marked "Expectations", "Background", "Worries" posted on the wall, (iv) prestik to attach papers to the wall.

Allow 30 minutes for this exercise

Procedure

1. Divide the participants into pairs. (If there is an odd number, then one group may have three members).
2. Give each participant five pieces of paper.
3. Ask each participant to write an "E" on two of the papers, a "B" on one of the papers and a "W" on two of the papers.
4. Participants interview their partners asking the following questions:

Expectations

What two things do you hope to get from this programme?

Background

What background do you have in farm business management?

5. Each participant should record the answers in as few words as possible, putting the answers for expectations on the papers marked "E" and the answer for background on the paper marked "B".

Exercise 1.2B (continued)

6. Ask all participants to write down not more than two things that worry them the most about being on the programme. (Write one concern per piece of paper marked "W".) Assure them that their "fears" will be kept anonymous. They should not write their names on these papers.
7. Randomly ask pairs to come forward. As they come up, they should drop their worry papers into the "Worry" box. Then each participant in turn should share their partner's answers to the first set of questions (i.e. expectations and background) and then stick the answers on the wall under the appropriate heading. As each pair comes up they should try to group similar or same answers on the wall.
8. When everyone has had a turn, randomly take out the "worry" answers and read them while putting them up on the wall under the "worries" category. Group the same or similar worries on the wall.
9. Review and discuss the lists.

Learning points

It is very likely that group members have little background in farm management (one of the reasons the participants were invited). So there should be a shared comfort that most, if not all, are starting from the beginning. Gently celebrate anyone who does have some background in farm business management. In general be very encouraging.

It is also very likely that the group has similar expectations and that many of these are addressed in the programme. If there is anything not covered, note it and if it fits in, perhaps it can be accommodated. The facilitators will need to use their discretion here. It is again very likely that they themselves share similar fears. Whatever fears have been expressed, offer reassurance.

Exercise introduction

Now that we have had a chance to get to know one another and to clarify our expectations and fears, let us spend some time looking at why we are here and what all of us will get out of the programme. This training course is specifically designed in terms of the content it covers, the skills it develops and the way that learning is done. Exercise 1.2C (Programme guidelines) outlines a basic understanding of these things, and we shall spend some time reading and studying it.

Exercise 1.2C

Programme guidelines

Purpose: To create unity of vision about the process and outcomes. Participants should have read Handout 1.2A prior to this exercise.

Methods: Question formulation, develop group skills.

Materials: (i) Handouts 1.2B (Programme guidelines), (ii) a red pen or highlighter, (iii) a glossary notebook (a glossary format that can be photocopied is provided on last pages of this session).

This exercise can be conducted as:

(i) a group exercise or alternatively, (ii) a facilitated plenary discussion.

*Allow 1 hour for the group exercise
and 30 minutes for the facilitated discussion*

Procedure for a group exercise

1. Divide the class into teams of 4–5.
2. Ask the teams to take turns reading aloud a paragraph from the Programme guidelines in Handout 1.2A. Participants should underline important words and concepts in each point and then ask and answer one or two relevant questions (an example of a format is shown opposite). Direct the participants as follows: (i) **participant "A"** reads **point one** aloud, the others read along silently and everyone underlines important words or concepts; (ii) **"A"** then asks **participant "B"** a question from that point and **"B"** answers using the same or similar words as those in the point; (iii) then **"B"** reads **point two** aloud, the others read silently and everyone underlines words and highlights; (iv) **"B"** then asks **"C"** a question from that point and **"C"** answers; (v) repeat this process until **all participants** have read and answered.

During this exercise participants should record important terms in their glossary.

*Exercise 1.2C (continued)***Example**

Paragraph	Question	Answer
1	Whom is this programme for?	Me
2	What does it mean to be a collaborator?	To work together to help one another learn
3	Who is responsible for learning?	Each participant

3. Once the handout is read, reassemble the teams into the class group.
4. Ask the following questions. Each participant should stand when they answer. Move fairly rapidly with this exercise to ensure energy is maintained.
5. Remind the participants about their glossary notebooks and encourage them to use them as they go along.

Procedure for a facilitated plenary discussion

1. Ask one participant to read the first point of the Programme guidelines given in Handout 1.2A.
2. Facilitate a discussion about the point by asking and getting participants to answer questions. (You may want to use the attached question—answer guide provided on the next two pages.)
3. Choose a second person to read the second point.
4. Facilitate a discussion based on questions.
5. Repeat the process until all the points are read and discussed. Distribute the work evenly. Make sure that everyone reads at least one point and answers at least one question.

For the facilitator

Examples of questions and answers for discussion

Question	Answer
What are the overall learning outcomes of this training programme?	<p>Understanding the value and place of market-orientated farm management in an agricultural extension programme</p> <p>Understanding the importance of using a participatory approach and of working with groups of farmers particularly in practising agricultural extension in market-orientated farm management extension</p> <p>Understanding the fundamentals of market-orientated farm management</p> <p>Acquiring specific skills needed to practise agricultural extension in market-orientated farm management extension</p> <p>Acquiring skills to apply a range of participatory tools to help farmers implement market-orientated farm management on their own farms</p>
Who is this programme for?	Me
What is the programme designed to equip you with?	Help farmers improve the profitability of their farms
What is the focus of learning in the various training sessions?	Market-orientated farm management
What are the participants?	Collaborators
What does it mean to be a collaborator?	To work together to help one another learn
Who is responsible for learning?	Each participant
What are you expected to share?	Their experience
Why?	To enhance the learning opportunities
How much formal training in farm management do you need to participate in this course?	None
Why?	The programme will cover fundamental principles, concepts and tools sufficiently to give us adequate working knowledge and skill to enable us to apply them in the field
What does market-orientated farm management focus on?	Efficient production of farm goods for profitable sale off the farm
What should market-orientated farm management help a farmer to do?	Sustainably and continually increase their wealth over time
What is the framework that runs throughout the programme?	Inputs/farm and farm products/the market

For the facilitator (continued)

Examples of questions and answers for discussion

Question	Answer
What is the learning approach used in this programme?	Experiential and participatory
Why?	To help ensure participants acquire specific understanding, insight and skills needed to assist farmers engage sustainably in profitable market-orientated farming
What can you expect to happen each day?	Practical exercises, group discussions and individual work
What else is planned?	Field visits
What will help you track your progress?	Specific learning outcomes for each module, unit and session
What are the two versions of tools you could learn?	Number-based and symbol-based tools
What is the difference between these two versions?	Number-based uses numbers and requires calculations Symbol-based uses symbols to represent numbers and quantities
Why are you going to learn two versions?	So we can help both literate/numerate and illiterate/innumerate farmers apply farm management tools on their farms
What will you be asked to do at the end of the programme?	Develop a plan for applying what you have learned and practised with farmer groups.

Note

At the end of this exercise distribute Handout 1.2B (Worksheet – Programme guidelines) and ask each participant to answer the three questions posed (items 1, 2, 3) and, using the blank spaces, formulate three more questions (items 4, 5, 6). They should then answer all six questions. Upon completion review the results with the class.

*Space for notes
and questions
for the facilitator*

Programme guidelines

1. The participants in the training programme are collaborators – meaning you work together helping one another learn. While there is a facilitator to guide the learning process, all of you (including the facilitator) will share in the learning experience. You are responsible for your own learning. All of you are expected to share your experiences to enhance the learning opportunities both in terms of the specific learning outcomes and in terms of the training programme itself.
2. You do not need to have had any formal training or background in farm management to participate successfully in this course
3. The programme is designed to better equip you in your efforts to help farmers improve the profitability of their farms. The focus of learning in the various training sessions is market-orientated farm management. All over Africa, rural farm families are faced with many difficulties in relation to food security, income security, and general health and well-being. These families need to improve their situations. They need to make their livelihoods less vulnerable to the changes and opportunities of the world. One way to do this is to help them look at how they manage their farms so that they are in a better position to decide what to do with their farms. They will be able to make better decisions about producing food and about generating income from their farms. Making better and more informed decisions will make these families more secure and stable, and will make their farming activities more sustainable.

The programme will cover fundamental principles, concepts and tools sufficiently to allow you to apply them in the field.

*Programme guidelines (continued)***Conceptual framework**

To facilitate the purpose and outcomes of this programme, a few terms and concepts are explained below.

1. In general, farm management can be defined as planning and implementing activities on a farm for the purpose of sustainably supporting a family. Market-orientated farm management focuses attention on efficient production of farm goods for profitable sale off the farm. Therefore, good market-orientated farm management should help farmers and farm families sustainably and continually increase their wealth over time.
2. The framework that will run throughout the training programme is a simplified model of the basic elements to be explored in generating income and profits on a farm. This framework is expressed in the following model:

INPUTS → THE FARM & PRODUCTS → MARKET

3. Inputs are defined as those things (e.g. seed, fertilizers, labour, knowledge, skill, finance, technology) that are necessary for production on the farm.
4. The farm is defined as the place where crops and animals are raised for the purpose of producing certain goods including food and fibre products. Most certainly, farms vary from country to country. They may even vary greatly within the same country. Whatever comprises the farm, it is the place where products are produced, and the principles of market-orientated farm management can be applied to improve profitability.

Programme guidelines (continued)

5. The "market" is taken to be the place where products from the farm are sold or consumed.

Given this broad framework, in this programme you will learn about and practise the application of basic concepts and tools of market-orientated farm management to situations relevant to your own experience.

The learning approach

As stated earlier, this programme focuses on learning. In this programme, learning means: gaining understanding and insight about concepts and principles, and building practical skills. (In this programme the concepts, principles and skills are related to market-orientated farm management.)

1. This programme uses experiential and participatory learning. This means that you will learn by experiencing and doing things together.

2. The learning will take place mostly in interactive groups. These methods are used to help ensure you acquire specific understanding, insight and skills needed to assist farmers engage sustainably in profitable market-orientated farming.

3. Each session of the programme has specific learning outcomes for knowledge, understanding and/or skill. This enables both you and the facilitator to track progress in learning throughout the programme. Insight will come through personal and group reflection (thinking deeply about) on both content and practice.

4. Each day you will receive some instruction and will participate in practical classroom exercises, group discussions and individual work. Above all, you will be given the opportunity to practise the tools you study.

Programme guidelines (continued)

5. During this programme you will learn about and practise many tools. Tools are basically instruments that enable you to analyse the various aspects of farm management. The programme will help you understand the tools and how and when to use them.

6. These tools are based on specific farm management concepts. Some of these concepts may be new to you. Therefore, one of the first things you will need to do is to build your own glossary of terms and concepts. Your facilitator will provide you with glossary sheets on which you can record the terms, their meanings and an example or illustration. It will be up to you to keep this glossary up to date as you work through the programme. It will also be very useful for you in your later work.

7. Make notes about how you can apply what you are learning. At the end of the programme you will be asked to develop a plan for applying what you have learned and practised with individual farmers and farmer groups.

8. As you go through the programme, you are encouraged to participate as much as possible.

9. In some cases, you will have the option to apply two versions: "number-based" or "symbol-based" tools. Symbol-based tools work with symbols representing words. Using these visual expressions you can help farmers learn to apply valuable farm management concepts to their own farms. Symbol-based tools are also participatory, and this will help you when you work with groups of farmers.

10. Symbol-based tools will make it possible for you to also work with farmers who have difficulty in literacy and numeracy.

*Programme guidelines (continued)***Learning outcomes**

The overall learning outcomes of the programme are:

1. understanding the value and place of market-orientated farm management in an agricultural extension programme;
2. understanding the fundamentals of market-orientated farm management including (i) how profits are made on a farm, (ii) the input-production-marketing relationships of a farm, (iii) the importance of these relationships to farm profitability;
3. acquiring specific skills needed to practise agricultural extension in market-orientated farm management extension, including the ability to (i) analyse farming operations and propose plans, (ii) develop a basic whole-farm plan, (iii) develop and use a whole-farm cash flow;
4. understanding the value of using symbol-based tools and of working with groups of farmers particularly in practising agricultural extension in market-orientated farm management extension;
5. acquiring skills to apply a range of participatory tools to help farmers implement market-orientated farm management on their own farms;
6. understanding the importance of sustaining natural and other resources that are linked to the farm.

Worksheet — Programme guidelines

Question formulation and answer

	Question	Answer
1	<i>What are the overall learning outcomes of this training programme?</i>	
2	<i>What does market-orientated farm management focus on?</i>	
3	<i>What should market-orientated farm management help a farmer to do?</i>	

Worksheet – Programme guidelines (continued)

Question formulation and answer

	Question	Answer
4		
5		
6		

Handout 1.2C – Glossary of terms and concepts

To make one glossary notebook:

- (i) print one copy of this title page (adjacent),
- (ii) print 20 copies of the interior pages (Glossary entry),
- (iii) cut these in half to make 40 sheets in total,
- (iv) punch two holes along the left margin of each sheet
to fit the ring binder for the handouts,
(as students add terms, they can re-arrange
the pages in alphabetical order).

Name: _____

Glossary entry

Term: _____

Definition: _____

Example or illustration

Glossary entry

Term: _____

Definition: _____

Example or illustration

Preparing for Session 1.3
Farming and
market-oriented farm management

Learning outcomes

- (i) A shared understanding of some of the issues and of one another's perceptions about farming and market-orientated farm management,
- (ii) an appreciation of the diversities and similarities of thought in the group.

Training aids

- Exercise 1.3A (Perceptions of farm management)
 - Handout 1.3A (Worksheet – Perceptions of farm management)
 - Handout 1.3B (Worksheet – Facilitators' record form)
-

Notes

Farming and market-oriented farm management

The objective of this session is to help participants develop an understanding of one another's perceptions and beliefs about farming and market-oriented farm management. We shall examine our shared views to discover the diversities and similarities of thought in the group. Extension workers do not necessarily have the same understanding even if they have similar backgrounds and education. If we learn to appreciate the diversities and similarities in ourselves we shall be more effective in our work in support of farmers.

Opening statement

*Our point of departure in this session is ...
"What do we understand and believe about farming and market-orientated farm management?"
If we are to be effective partners in this study, it is first necessary to establish common ground. This will provide an opportunity to discover our shared and divergent views and how to work through these in our efforts to help farmers fulfil their farm and household objectives.*

Exercise introduction

In Exercise 1.3A (Perceptions of farm management) we shall conduct a survey to gain insight into some of the assumptions made about farming, farm management and market orientation. This will help us as a group to understand our various perspectives, which we will then use as a point of discussion and unity building.

Exercise 1.3A

Perceptions of farm management

Purpose: To survey perceptions to gain insight into the assumptions made about farming, farm management and market orientation, and to appreciate diversity of opinion. Participants should have read Handout 1.3A prior to this exercise.

Method: Answer questions and discuss.

Materials: (i) A pen, (ii) a flip chart or newsprint prepared as in the example below for use in the classroom.

Allow 30 minutes for this exercise

When the participants have completed the Handout 1.3A Worksheet,
collectively record their answers as shown below

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
1. The main purpose of having a farm is to produce food for the family	xxxx	xxx	xx
2. The purpose of farm management is to optimize production on the farm			
3. The main purpose of farming is to generate income			
4. Farming should result in personal satisfaction			
5. The purpose of farm management is to maximize profits from the farm			
6. It should be the goal of every farmer to produce agricultural goods only for the market			
7. To be profitable, farmers need to keep detailed records of income and expenses			
8. Market-orientated farm management requires formal training			
9. Semi-literate farmers can learn about market-orientated farm management			

Handout 1.3B provides an enlarged version of this form
to be used for recording.

*Exercise 1.3A (continued)***Procedure**

1. Give each participant a copy of Handout 1.3A. They should read and answer the questions individually.

Learning points

Some participants may say that they cannot simply agree or disagree because the issues depend on other factors. This is possibly true. But assure the participants that this exercise is primarily meant to draw out perceptions and to help open their minds to some of the issues to be covered in the programme.

2. Ask the participants to read their answers to the questions. Do one question at a time making sure each person shares their answer before moving on to the next question.
3. Record the answers of each participant on Handout 1.3B.
4. Once the responses have been recorded, tally up the totals to see the range of perspectives. Starting with the first statement, ask a participant who has expressed a minority view to explain their perception. Then ask a participant with the majority view to explain their perception. Allow a brief discussion of the diverse views, but to not allow it to become a serious debate. The purpose is to be sure that the participants hear and understand the different perceptions. Be sure to get as many of the participants involved as possible.
5. Work through each of the statements in a similar way. If there is no minority view, then the facilitator should present a minority view to ensure that an alternate perception is shared. (Remember, the "Don't knows" are important because they are useful for opening up discussion.)

For the facilitator

Below are some possible reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with the nine statements. Use this as a guide to diversifying views. Where appropriate (especially where there is no minority view) share the reasons given to expand and enhance the learning experience.

1. The purpose of farming is food for the family.

Agree: Many families must use their farms for household food security. It is the only way of assuring survival of the families. Marketing of farm products is too risky to assure food security.

Disagree: Many people believe that food security comes from household food production, but food security can also be achieved by producing goods for the market and buying the required food.

2. The purpose of farm management is optimum production.

Agree: A farm should be as productive as possible to produce at the level where one gets the most from inputs.

Disagree: A farm should be as profitable as possible. This may mean producing lower yields, but making a higher profit.

3. The main purpose of farming is to generate income.

Agree: Farming is a business and should be used to generate income.

Disagree: Farming is meant to produce food to provide food security.

For the facilitator (continued)

4. Farming should result in personal satisfaction.

Agree: Farming (as any form of employment) should lead to personal happiness. If it doesn't then one should stop farming and find another means of living.

Disagree: Farming is about survival. Many people have no choice but to farm, even if it does not bring about personal satisfaction.

5. The purpose of farm management is to maximize profits from the farm.

Agree: Farming is a business and therefore it should generate maximum profits.

Disagree: (i) Farming may be part of a family household livelihoods strategy, which includes a combination of 'unprofitable' production of staples or other foods and farming for cash income, (ii) farming for maximum profits that is done at the expense of the environment or with the exploitation of people (e.g. labour, children) is not ethical or is it sustainable.

6. It should be the goal of every farmer to produce agricultural goods only for the market.

Agree: Since farming is about generating income, choice of products should be determined by market demand and price (e.g. profitability).

Disagree: Farming may be part of a family household livelihood strategy, which includes a production of staples or other foods that will be consumed at home and not sent to market.

For the facilitator (continued)

7. To be profitable, a farmer needs to keep detailed records of his farm income and expenses.

Agree: Records are an essential part of farm management. With accurate records of income and expense, farmers will be able to decide what, how and how much to produce.

Disagree: Farmers can adequately plan with estimated or approximated information about income and expense.

8. Market-orientated farm management requires formal training.

Agree: The market is very complex. Farmers not formally trained in farm management may be taken advantage of.

Disagree: With basic skills about how to use information and access resources, farmers can apply the principles of market-orientated farm management.

9. Farmers with low literary skills can learn about farm management.

Agree: There are many participatory and 'picture-driven' learning methods that can equip farmers with low literacy and numeracy skills in market-orientated farm management to apply them on their farms.

Disagree: Market-orientated farm management needs much technical information, particularly about markets. These tools require good reading, writing and numeracy.

Not every farmer will share the same view of farming and farm management: (i) some farmers will farm only for food, (ii) some will farm for food and cash income, (iii) some will farm only for cash income, (iv) farmers may change their purpose for farming over the years depending on many factors. With such a diversity of understanding about farming and farm management, extension workers can support farmers in fulfilment of the different farming and household objectives.

Worksheet – Perceptions of farm management

Nine statements related to farming, farm management and market-orientated farming are listed below. Read each statement carefully; think briefly about it and decide whether you "Agree" or "Disagree" with the statement, or if you "Don't know". Put an 'X' in the appropriate box next to each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. This exercise is an attempt to understand the various perspectives of those in the group as a point of discussion and unity building.

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
1. The main purpose of having a farm is to produce food for the family			
2. The purpose of farm management is to optimize production on the farm			
3. The main purpose of farming is to generate income			
4. Farming should result in personal satisfaction			
5. The purpose of farm management is to maximize profits from the farm			
6. It should be the goal of every farmer to produce agricultural goods only for the market			
7. To be profitable, farmers need to keep detailed records of income and expenses			
8. Market-orientated farm management requires formal training			
9. Semi-literate farmers can learn about market-orientated farm management			

Worksheet – Facilitators' record form

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
1. The main purpose of having a farm is to produce food for the family			
2. The purpose of farm management is to optimize production on the farm			
3. The main purpose of farming is to generate income			
4. Farming should result in personal satisfaction			
5. The purpose of farm management is to maximize profits from the farm			
6. It should be the goal of every farmer to produce agricultural goods only for the market			
7. To be profitable, farmers need to keep detailed records of income and expenses			
8. Market-orientated farm management requires formal training			
9. Semi-literate farmers can learn about market-orientated farm management			

Possible roles of extension workers

By the end of this session participants will have a broader understanding of the possible roles of extension workers and methods of agricultural extension to use when engaging with farmers — particularly in reference to market-oriented farm management. Here we will explore a range of extension methodologies that can be used and briefly discuss different extension practices. This will provide some insight into the organizational environment in which participants operate.

Opening statement

Every extension worker has had some form of extension training. This may be formal, non-formal or 'in-service'.

Training in agricultural extension varies considerably in terms of technical content, extension frameworks, methodologies and approaches. We shall see in the course of the programme that an important element in agricultural extension is the concept of continuous learning. Farmers and extension workers need constantly to update their knowledge and skill as research is conducted. For many extension workers, learning focuses primarily on farm production (e.g. yields, diseases, technology, production practices). Two areas that receive less attention are farm management and extension methodologies.

Learning points

The extension worker has a crucial role to play as a facilitator of farmer learning. The key is to provide tools for guiding farmers to use the right methods and to understand the basic principles for enriching content and thus understanding. If used correctly, these tools and principles will bring forward the potential skills, creativity and knowledge of the group to the participating farmers. This is what is meant by facilitation. To facilitate farmers, a certain confidence is necessary, which is gained through regular practice and involvement in engaging with them.

Exercise introduction

Even though two extension officers may work for the same ministry, they will have a different understanding and approach to agricultural extension. The purpose of Exercise 1.4A (Approaches to agricultural extension) is to get a clearer picture of the range of understanding and approaches that exist in this group. This will allow each of us to expand our understanding of agricultural extension and to appreciate the work that we are doing.

Exercise 1.4A

Approaches to agricultural extension

Purpose: To help participants explore the focus of extension and the degree to which working with groups or individuals is used.

Method: Pocket voting (variation).

Materials: (i) enough cards in the shapes of squares, triangles and circles so that each participant has one of each kind, (ii) a pen, (iii) two voting boxes labelled "Individual farmer" and "Group of farmers".

Allow 30–45 minutes for this exercise

Procedure

1. Seat the group in a single-row circle. Give each participant a set of three cards indicating:

INPUT INFORMATION — square ■

PRODUCTION INFORMATION — triangle ▲

MARKET INFORMATION — circle ●

2. Ask them to write their names on the back of each card.
3. Place two voting boxes just outside the door. Mark one "Individual farmer" and the other "Group of farmers". (Use a box the size of a shoebox with a slot in the lid.)
4. Explain that this is just a fun and random way to choose someone to tell a story about engaging with farmers. The participant whose name is drawn from one of the boxes will be asked to tell a short story.
5. Ask the participants to think of the last time they had a discussion with a farmer or a group of farmers about any or all of the three types of information.

Exercise 1.4A (continued)

6. When they have had enough time, ask each participant to go to the voting box and drop the relevant card(s) in the relevant box(es). (e.g. if the last time an extension worker had a discussion about market information was with a group of farmers, place the MARKET INFORMATION card in the "Group of farmers" voting box.)
7. When everyone has voted, collect the two boxes. Open the "Group of farmers" and, with your eyes closed, take out one card. Read the name and invite that person to tell the story of the meeting with the group of farmers and the discussion (input, market or production).
8. Congratulate the storyteller.
9. Draw another card and invite that participant to tell a story. (Be sure to remember to congratulate.)
10. Do this a third time.
11. Then ask the three storytellers some questions such as:
 - Why did you speak to a group and not to an individual?
 - Did you contact the group or did the group contact you?
 - How did you participate in the group discussion?
12. Encourage other participants to ask questions and discuss them.
13. When the discussion is over, empty out the "Group of farmers" box. With the names down, sort the cards into the three categories (be sure to include the three that have been taken out already).

Exercise 1.4A (continued)

14. Count the number of votes. How many input votes? How many market votes? How many production votes? How many in total in the "Group of farmers" box?

15. Now generate some discussion about:

- Why is it that there were so many/few group of farmer votes?
- Why were there so many for inputs versus production? or production versus market?

Learning points

Here explore two things. One is whether the focus is on individual farmers or on groups and why. The other is what kind of information is most often discussed (input, market or production) and why.

It is anticipated that group work is accepted but may not be practised for any number of reasons. The discussion should try to discover and capture those reasons. These may include policy issues, the scattered nature of farmers, or social or political constraints.

It is also anticipated that the most common sharing of information is about production. Given the previous exercise that shows about how much information and how many farmers to reach, extension workers need to work with groups. The discussion should try to discover and capture the reasons we do or do not share input and marketing information.

Further, discuss the vision of seeing farmers as partners in the provision of agricultural extension, which can be done partly through farmer-to-farmer extension (or farmer-to-group extension).

Exercise introduction

We are all often so busy and focussed on what we are doing that we do not have time to reflect or think about the work we are doing. This next exercise will be a guided self-reflection of our own work as extension officers.

Exercise 1.4B Self-awareness

Purpose: To help participants explore their thoughts and preferences in connection with extension.

Method: Guided self-reflection*, group discussion.

Materials: Handout 1.4A (Worksheet — Self-awareness questions).

Allow 50 minutes for this exercise

Procedure

1. Give each participant a copy of Handout 1.4A.
2. Each participant should answer the questionnaire individually.
3. Starting with the first question, ask the participants for their thoughts. Do not 'force' them to expose their thoughts, but encourage them to do so.
4. Allow for some discussion after all the participants have shared their answers. Is there any common ground? Look especially for diversity and discuss it in the context of market-orientated farm management.

Learning points

Here we want the extension workers to become aware of three things: (i) the value and efficiency of working with groups of farmers and of acquiring the skills, tools and confidence to do this, (ii) the value of seriously generating and disseminating information, encouraging farmers to generate and disseminate information, and of acquiring the skills, tools and confidence to do this, (iii) the value of building skills, tools and confidence to engage in extension work that incorporates market-orientated farm management.

* Because this is a guided self-reflection, the facilitator should take extra care to become familiar with the questions.

Worksheet — Self-awareness questions

Extension workers using the manual should ask themselves the following questions to help determine how their own biases, experience, skills and knowledge might affect the way in which the farm management manual can be applied. These questions constitute only a small sample of the many questions that could be asked and are intended to serve to help extension workers to start thinking about their personal approach to using the concepts, tools and techniques. Extension workers can use the insight that is gained to develop a plan for complementing their own approach by asking for assistance from others.

1. Do I feel competent and confident asking questions and appraising information about farm business management issues or am I more skilled in dealing with technical production issues?

2. Do I think market-orientated farm management is important? Do I think it is important to have market-orientated farm management skills? What market-orientated farm management skills do I have? (Make a list)

Worksheet – Self-awareness questions (continued)

3. Do I have the skills needed to put farmers at ease while facilitating the participatory exercises? What participatory skills do I have? (Make a list)

4. Do I tend to prefer working with a group of farmers or individual farmers?

5. How do I feel and what do I do when I find that farmers are either not responsive to my ideas or disagree with my ideas? Do I only want to work with farmers who will implement my ideas? Do I persevere? Do I lose confidence? Do I look for other farmers? Do I try different extension approaches and methodologies?

Worksheet – Self-awareness questions (continued)

6. Am I tactful enough to bring up farm business weaknesses and deficiencies soon after a first analysis of the farm with the farmer? Record a story of a successful tactful engagement if you can.

7. Am I and the Ministry/NGO prepared to invest adequate time and resources to make the extension communication process a success and insure that our work is viable over the long term? Is this working in your area (if so give an example)?

8. How do I view farmers? Are they end-users of technology and information transfer? Are they innovators and researchers of technology? Do I see them as partners or as beneficiaries?

Review of Module 1

While becoming acquainted with one another, participants were urged to build a shared vision regarding the programme, market-oriented farm management and the role of the extension workers in the progress. The aim of this segment is to review these important introductory activities.

The following outline will guide the facilitator in a brief review of the activities of this module.

Session 1.1

Getting to know one another

*Purpose of this session:
group cohesion and trust;
to better equip extension workers
in their duties to help farmers.*

Learning outcomes

Learning each other's names;
building the group;
group cohesion and trust;
initial future/vision focussing;
initial mapping skills;
small group discussion;
initial presentation skills;

Session 1.2

Building a shared vision

*Purpose of this session:
build a shared vision about the programme.*

Learning outcomes

Establish ground rules.
Identify participants' expectations and clear their concerns about the programme.
Develop a common understanding about process and outcomes of the programme.
Participants create a level playing field

Develop the following skills: (i) interviewing, (ii) presentation, (iii) question formulation, (iv) small group discussion.

Session 1.3

Farming and market-oriented farm management

*Purpose of this session:
begin the process of effective learning.*

Learning outcomes

- (i) A shared understanding of some of the issues and of one another's perceptions about farming and market-orientated farm management,
- (ii) an appreciation of the diversities and similarities of thought in the group.

Session 1.4

Possible roles of extension workers

*Purpose of this session:
creating benchmarks for reflecting on learning.*

Learning outcomes

- (i) A shared understanding of the roles of extension workers and their relationships with farmers and various role players,
- (ii) an understanding of the generation and dissemination of information,
- (iii) an understanding of extension methodologies,
- (iv) self-awareness of one's knowledge and preferences relevant to extension in market-orientated farm management.

Closing questions

Ask the participants if they believe that the overall purpose of the module has been achieved and if they have improved their skills in

- (i) participatory diagramming, (ii) use of matrices,*
- (iii) visioning (comparisons), (iv) working in small groups,*
- (v) group presentations, (vi) storytelling (individual presentation),*
- (vii) pocket voting and (viii) self-reflection.*

The following is a list of the AGSF series TRAINING MATERIALS FOR AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT, MARKETING AND FINANCE

1. Farm planning and management for trainers of extension workers in the Caribbean, 2004 (CD-ROM, English).
2. Horticultural marketing extension techniques, 2004 (CD-ROM, English).
3. Farm planning and management for trainers of extension workers. Asia, 2006 (Hard copy and CD-ROM, English).
4. Integrating environmental and economic accounting at the farm level, 2005 (CD-ROM, English).
5. Curso de gestión de agronegocios en empresas asociativas rurales en América Latina y el Caribe, 2005 (CD-ROM, Español).
6. Market-oriented farm management for trainers of extension workers. Africa, 2007 (Hard copy and CD-ROM, English).

In preparation

- Farm planning and management for trainers of extension workers. Latin America (CD-ROM, in Spanish).
- Training manuals on farmer business schools. Asia and Africa.

Other work

- FAO Pacific Farm Management and Marketing Series 3, Helping small farmers think about better growing and marketing (Hard copy)*.

* Copies soon to be available from AGSF

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and the information on FAO's activities
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This publication is also available on the Internet at:
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Module 1 is intended to set the learning foundation for this training programme on market-oriented farm management. The purpose is to better equip extension workers in their efforts to help farmers improve the profitability of their farms. The approach is interactive, learning based and designed to help professional extension workers support smallholder farmers who are beginning to sell, or already are selling, produce on the market. The aim is to increase the capability of farmers to manage their farms more effectively.