

## **Information Seeking Behavior of Poultry Farmers in Kano State, Nigeria**

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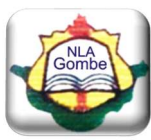
### **Abstract**

*Information is vital in the survival and development of human activities. With the abundance information sources and resources in different format, information seekers are left to search through various resources to meet their information need. Libraries, internet, and extension services, veterinary services are medium of communication poultry farmers use to exchange information. This research describes the results of a survey carried out on poultry farmers in Kano State to identify the information seeking behavior of poultry farmers. The instrument for collection of data was questionnaire. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings from the poultry farmers shows that; information seeking behavior can be oral communication with friends or neighbors, consulting veterinary doctors and extension agents. Ninety (90%) of the respondents indicated that they always have access to information and that the information found is very relevant to their poultry farming. Additionally inadequate fund, lack of electricity, poor network connectivity among rural farmers and inadequate extension agents and veterinary doctors were identified as major challenges affecting the information seeking of poultry farmers in Kano State. In order to address the challenges the following were recommended for the study, provision of agricultural libraries in all the forty four (44) local government areas of Kano State, provision of adequate extension agents and veterinary doctors, constant power supply and internet connectivity and good government policy that would support the poultry farming etc among others .*

**Keywords:** Information Seeking Behavior, Poultry Farmers; Kano State; Nigeria

### **Introduction**

Information is a concept, that is difficult to define because it has several dimensions or meanings. Aina (2004) stated that information means many things to different people. To some people, information is news, while to others information connotes data or facts, while among poultry farmers information is synonymous with knowledge gathered for the activities of poultry industry. In today's dynamic environment, information has become an indispensable tool for promoting the development of society and is one of the national resources that assists in national development. As such it has become the raw material for making decision, creating knowledge and fueling the modern organization. To succeed in any aspect of human endeavor, accessibility to quick and up to date information is very essential (Okoro and Okoro, 2006). Information is one of the key resources in a society that enables members of the society to improve their well beings. This assertion therefore, justifies the need to understand the information needs and seeking behavior of different individual poultry farmers in Kano state inclusive. Such a knowledge would help in guiding the development of poultry industry in Nigeria and Kano state, Beal, (2002) defined information needs, as a state or process started when one perceives that there is a gap between information and knowledge available to solve a problem in order to improve Poultry industry, farmers need information on issues such as decision making, production, marketing, feeding, medication, Breed type, and disease control or outbreak.



## **Problem Statement**

Information is very important to the development of any individual, groups, organization, society or the world at large. In facts there is no society that developed without full utilization of information. Womboh (2002) asserted that whenever there is discrepancy for instance in the affairs of humanity, the causes in most cases are traceable to a decision based on inadequate information. Poultry production (layers, broilers, cocreals, breeders) under intensive system provide a good source of proteins to Nigerians. It is a vibrant industry that is composed of many players, however, with such an array of participant in the value chain from production to consumption information at every steps become highly desirable and essential.

Despite the significance of information to poultry farmers, however, Problems arise within the value chain especially at the production levels where lacks of information led to catastrophes as attested by 2005, 2009 and 2015 Avian Influenza Virus (AI) out breaks in Nigeria and other parts of the world. Avian Influenza popularly known as Bird Flu has been the factor that led to collapse of most of the poultry farms because it has no medication. Farmers need information on how to prevent their farms.

In addition, inadequate extension service, which is non-formal information source that was designed to provide farmers with the desired information, leaves much to be achieved. The extension advisory services face so many problems such as insufficient number of extension agents, insufficient funding, low technical knowhow, lack of agricultural libraries at the zonal extension office etc compounded the information dissemination process that would assist poultry farmers to get access to information.

Evidence from the review of Green (2005) and Olaniyi (2013), shows that information resources are not adequate to poultry farmers due to poor network connectivity, or lack of access because even the extension services that most farmers used are not adequate to provide the needed information, also the seeking strategies employed by these farmers is not formal because they mostly rely on friends and experience people in the industry. This creates a lot of barriers to information seeking. There is also the factors such as economic, educational and environmental that hinders access to the required information.

## **Research Questions**

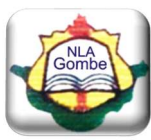
- 1) What is the information seeking strategies used by poultry farmers to seek for information in Kano State?
- 2.) What is the purpose for seeking information?

## **Research Objectives**

- 1) To identify the information seeking strategies used by the poultry to seek for information.
- 2) To identify the purpose for seeking information

## **Literature Review**

According to Ali and Odera (2010), Information seeking behavior is a way of gathering sufficient data to address perceived information gaps. Poultry farmers seek information as results of gaps lack or uncertainty about a certain phenomenon or problems within their domain. According to Owolade, (2008), information seeking behavior is the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information sought. The information seeking behavior of individual arise from the need to satisfy identified goals and move from level of uncertainty to the level of certainty.



Agricultural information is useful for farmers covering up their inadequacies in knowledge of certain basic practices that may include technical, marketing, social and legal agricultural information. It often involves face to face communication as well as passive reception through advertisement in print and electronic media (Yahaya, 2003).Owolade, (2008, p.103-105) noted that, “There is a lot of information available to farmers who are interested in increasing their productivity but farmers display diverse attitudes towards seeking and utilizing the information available to them”.

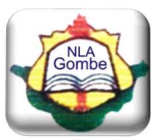
In view of his statement, information seeking behavior will helps in ensuring improved poultry farmers livelihood through the utilization of information. Afolabi, (2003), sees it as the way an information user conducts himself or an acts display when looking for, receiving or acquiring information. His utterances, gesture, anger, anxiety, eagerness, reluctance, zeal or any other attributes displayed by an information user in his effort to purchase, acquire, or receive news, data, stories, or anything that may inform or misinform his knowledge or understanding of something. These attributes can be regarded as seeking behavior.

Besides, Vickery and Vickery (1987), opined that ‘interest in the information sought, authenticity of the sources, motives and past experience in similar information content do affect seeking behavior for instances, the way a university lecturer behaves or reacts with looking for information in the library will be quite different from the way an undergraduate students do. In the wider society, the way an illiterate woman reacts when she hears the news of the death of a close relation may differ from the way an educated man will do. In like manner, the information seeking behavior of a business executive may vary from that of an unemployed graduate. While the unemployed would go personally to the library or anywhere he can get information from the executives business man would prefer sending his aid to the library or information data bank of the organization to collect information from him (Afolabi, 2003).

A point to note here is that the information seeking behavior of poultry farmers appears to be the same in some respect. Because the procedure of running poultry industries are always the same because they need the same information or knowledge to raise chickens. However, information seeking is not without problems; these problems are set backs to the free flow of information from the sources through the media to the users, and consumers.

The problems are economic, social, environmental, occupational and infrastructural .The economic problems of information seeking relate to the cost of information carrying by media, times and labor spent in looking for it. Attitude of people towards information seeking is contingent on the ease or otherwise of obtaining information. Poverty and scarcity of information being sought are not excluded.

Information seeking is thus a natural and necessary mechanism of human existence Wilson, (2000) described information behavior as those activities a person may engage in when identifying his own need for information, searching for such information in any way and using or transferring that information. He further stressed that information seeking is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of the need to satisfy some goals in the course of information seeking; the individual may interact with traditional information systems such as newspapers or a library or with computer based systems such as the web. To be more specific, information seeking behavior involves or has to do with some personal reasons for seeking information by an individual. It also has to do with the kind of information which is being sought (Lecki, 1996). Information seeking behavior is usually



expressed in various forms, i.e. from reading printed materials to research and experimentation.

### **Research Methodology**

Quantitative research methodology was used by the researcher using descriptive research design. According to Adamu (2010) a quantitative research methodology is appropriate where quantifiable measures of variables of interest can be formulated and tested, and inferences samples from the populations. The strengths of quantitative paradigm are that its methods produce quantifiable, reliable data that are usually generalizable to some larger population. Quantitative measures are often most appropriate for conducting needs assessments or for evaluations comparing outcomes with baseline data.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study consist all the registered poultry farmers in kano state and they are from all the forty four local government. The exact number as of time of this research obtained from the Association of poultry farmers is four hundred and forty seven (447). Other poultry farmers that are not registered are not considered in this study.

### **Research Instruments**

The data collection instruments for this study is questionnaire. The justification for using questionnaire is because the researcher employed only the management officials to answer the question asked in the questionnaire, other staff are exempted from the study. The management officials of poultry farms are mostly literate people some even from urban areas.

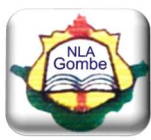
### **Findings of the Study.**

#### **Information Seeking Strategies Used by Poultry Farmers**

<b>Information seeking strategies</b>	<b>Yes( )</b>	<b>No ( )</b>	<b>Total</b>
Consulting veterinary doctors	144(48.5)	45(15.2)	189(63.7)
Listening agricultural programs in radio and other media	143(48.1)	46(15.5)	189(63.6)
Searching libraries or information centers	30(10.1)	159(53.5)	189(63.6)
On-line searching	30(10.1)	159(53.5)	189(63.6)
Asking friends or neighbours	127(42.8)	62(20.9)	189(63.6)
Consulting feed millers	71(23.9)	118(39.7)	189(63.6)
Consulting medicine vendors	114(38.4)	75(25.3)	189(63.7)
Farmers group meetings	122(41.1)	67(22.6)	189(63.7)
Others.	19(6.4)	170(57.2)	189(63.6)

Source: extracted by the researcher using Spss 20.0 version from questionnaire response, 2016.

The Table above indicates that the information seeking strategies of poultry farmers is through consulting veterinary doctors (144:48.5), which have the highest percentage, and is similar to the findings of Adekoya (2000), Chado and Igbashal (2009), the second(143:48.1) rely on listening agricultural programs in radio and other media, while (127:42.8) they depend on asking friend or neighbours, (114:38.4) are consulting medicine vendors and (12:41.1) are seeking information during farmers group meetings. However, only 30(10.1) are searching libraries and other information centers to seek for information while, (19:6.4) indicate other ways of seeking for information among poultry farmers. Therefore, consulting veterinary doctors and listening agricultural programs in radio have the highest number in the study. This may be as a result of free services offered by veterinary doctors and also the programs in the radio and television are also free.



From the analysis of the strategies preferred by poultry farmers, searching libraries and other information centers is the least though it has been proven to be effective (Al-Amin, 2014). This may be due to inadequate agricultural libraries in the state that would provide information to this farmers.

### **The Effectiveness of Seeking Strategies**

<b>Effectiveness of seeking strategies</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
Very effective	109	36.7
Effective	32	10.8
Ineffective	39	13.1
Not effective	117	39.4
Total	297	100

The above tables shows that poultry farmers consider the seeking strategies very effective with (109:36.7) of the responses, (32:10.8) indicated that it is effective and (39:13.1) considered the strategies as ineffective while (117:39.4) of the responses shows that the information seeking strategies is ineffective. This similar to the findings of Olaniyi (2013) which shows that the seeking strategies of poultry farmers is ineffective as most of them rely on friends and other farmers while veterinary officials are sometime not consulted.

### **The Purpose for Seeking Information**

<b>Purpose for seeking information</b>	<b>Yes ( )</b>	<b>NO ( )</b>	<b>Total</b>
General awareness	121(40.7)	68(22.9)	189(63.6)
Risk/ loss control	132(44.4)	64(21.5)	189(63.7)
Enhanced productivity	120(40.4)	69(23.2)	189(63.6)
Increase profitability	107(36.0)	82(27.6)	189(63.6)
Competitiveness	94(31.6)	95(32.0)	189(63.6)
Others	35(11.8)	154(51.9)	189(63.6)

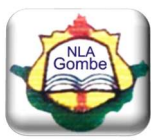
The table indicates that (132:44.4) of the response seek for information in order to prevent risk and loss in their farms, (121:40.7) they sought in order to have general awareness about the poultry farming while (120:40.4) is to enhanced productivity and (107:36.0) they sought to increase profitability while (94:31.6) they sought information in order to compete with other poultry farmers. The result of the findings shows that those that sought for information to avoid risk or loss have the highest percentage. This is also similar to the findings of Olaniyi (2013), which indicated that poultry farmers used information and communication technologies in order to avoid risk of disease outbreak and what is happening within the poultry industry.

### **Conclusions**

From the findings of the study, it is clear that poultry farmers need information on vaccination production, marketing, feeding, medication, and breed type disease control or out break the study also revealed that the purpose for seeking information among poultry farmers is for the improvement of the poultry farms and poultry farmers.

The study concluded that poultry farmers rely on veterinary doctors and extension official as their source. However there are no any agricultural libraries in Kano state that can assist poultry farmers in providing their information needs although they find information from medicine vendors and feed millers.





It also revealed that poultry farmers information services includes agricultural extension services, phone call services, S.M.S Services while library information services are not use by poultry farmers due to lack of agricultural libraries at the zonal offices.

The study also concluded that information seeking/ search strategies of poultry farmers in kano state is by consulting veterinary doctors and extension officials, asking extension officials, listening agricultural programs in print and electronic media oral communication with friends etc.

Moreover, the study has indicated that the challenges that affect the information seeking behavior of poultry farmers includes lack of agricultural libraries, inadequate veterinary doctors and extension officials, inadequate fund and lack of support by the government.

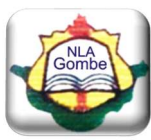
### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the study.

1. Veterinary doctors, extension officials, Libraries and other stake holders in the field of poultry farming should focus their attention in providing information needed by poultry farmers.
2. Veterinary doctors, extension officials, libraries feed millers and medicine vendors should provide the best information seeking strategies to poultry farmers
3. Government and all other stake holders should identify and provide the relevant information services for poultry farming such would enhances the operation of their activities.
4. They should try to provide the best seeking strategies that will be accurate, timely and relevant to poultry farmers.
5. Provision of agricultural libraries in at least each zone of extension services, constant power, supply and reliable internet connectivity from various service providers will assist in providing the information need of poultry farmers.

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