

A Study on ANGRAU Farmers Call Centre

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Farmers call centre, RARS, Lam, Guntur.

ABSTRACT

Calls received by Farmers Call Centre, ANGRAU during the year 2017 were analyzed for district wise, month wise, gender wise, season wise, crop wise and component wise call details. Maximum number of calls were received from Guntur district (837) followed by Krishna (265), Prakasam (218), Kurnool (210), Y.S.R.Kadapa (158), Chittore (158%) and Anantapur (112), Nellore (100), West Godavari (84), others (60), East Godavari (58), Srikakulam (46), Vizag (32) and Viyanagaram (22). More number of calls were received during the month of January (324), followed by February (263), December (254), September and November (221), October (217), June (192), July (176), August (160), April (127), March (103), the least number of calls were made during the month of May (96). Majority of calls were received from the male farmers (96.30%) and during rabi season (54.33%). Pulses (22.78%), cereals (20.07%), vegetables (14.64%), commercial crops (10.61%) and oil seeds (9.12%) were the major crop categories on which queries were received from the farmers. Farmers clarified their doubts on plant protection (38.80%), crop production (37.57%), loan, finance and subsidies (6.07%) and implements and farm machinery (4.70%) aspects.

In the present era of information revolution, ability to acquire and use information is regarded as national asset. Information is considered as a resource much like land, labour and capital. Access to information and improved communication is therefore, considered as a crucial requirement for the success of any developmental efforts. Agriculture is no exception to this phenomenon. Information may come to farmers from various sources. It may be from personnel, impersonal, institutional, localite, and cosmopolite or mass media sources. The appropriateness of these sources varies from enterprise to enterprise, situation to situation and from time to time. Further, the credibility of information sources also varies with respect to the competency and trustworthiness of the source. Hence, it becomes quite important to channelize the right information at the right time and through the right channel. It is the field of agriculture that knowledge networking through ICT is going to make a big difference in the life of people in the developing world. ICT could provide farmers, farm related information such as package of practices, weather forecasting, access to credit, prices and availability of farm inputs, market information etc., the unrestricted flow of information through ICT process opens an avenue for the people to view other from a different perspective. Farmers dream earlier has become a reality as the farmers now can immediately make use of telephone to address their field problems and do other farm needs (Manhas *et al.*, 2005). In 1991, India had about 5.5 million telephones by the end of 2001, the total number of telephones increased to 33.80 million. The number

of rural telephones was increased by approximately 35 per cent per annum (Jhunjhunwala and Ashok, 2005). According to National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data, the people of rural India spend 25.33% of their income on the use of mobile phones and telephones (Kumar Vikram, 2016). This impressive growth in telecommunication sector is being utilized to provide information on demand to the farming community with the establishment of "Kisan Call Centers" (KCCs). The KCC is a synthesis of two separate technologies namely, the Information and Communication Technology and the agricultural technology. To optimally utilize the strength of these both systems, it was proposed to take full advantage of professionally managed call centre mechanism and dovetail it with the specialized knowledge of agricultural scientists and extension officers to reach the farming community.

Kisan Call Centre (KCC) was launched on 21st January 2004 across the country. It aims at providing technical advice to the issues raised by farmers instantly in the local language. Twenty five Kisan Call Centers are located at different parts of the country. The Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India is co-ordinating the work of different institutions involved in the scheme. With the bifurcation of the state of Andhra Pradesh Acharya N.G.Ranga Agricultural University established Farmers Call Centre (FCC) at Regional Agricultural Research Station, Lam, Guntur on 18.10.2016. FCC enables farmers to have direct discussions with the subject matter experts who are able to analyze the problem effectively and provide the solution directly. An attempt is made to study the district wise calls,

crop wise calls, per month calls received, season wise, gender wise and discipline wise calls received by the Farmers Call Centre (FCC) of ANGRAU. In order to get glimpses of the nature of calls made by the farmers, an exhaustive number of calls made during one year (2017) period have been analyzed. The findings therefore, serve as true representation of the callers in Andhra Pradesh and throw light on the functioning of Farmers Call Centre and help the planners, specialists and managers of Farmers Call Centres to make them more effective, useful and practical to the farming community.

METERIALAND METHODS

Secondary data were obtained from the records of FCC to know the temporal and spatial distribution of calls and query-wise distribution of calls during 2017 in Andhra Pradesh. Calls received by the Farmers Call Centre during the 2017 were distributed district wise, month wise, gender wise, season wise, crop wise and component wise. The data collected were tabulated and analyzed with the help of suitable statistical tools. The statistical tools and tests such as frequency, percentage, were used wherever found appropriate and the data was analyzed systematically to draw the valid inferences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Spatial distribution of the calls received during the year 2017

The data pertaining to the calls received by the Farmers Call Centre from 13 districts and other places was presented in table 1 and based on number of calls received districts were ranked. It could be noticed from the table that maximum number of calls were received from Guntur district (837) which works out to 35.56 per cent occupying the first rank. This was followed by Krishna (265), Prakasam (218), Kurnool (210), Y.S.R.Kadapa (158), Chittore (158%) and Anantapur districts with 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th ranks. Least number of calls were received from SPSR Nellore (100) (4.25%), West Godavari (84) (3.57%), others (60) (2.54%), East Godavari (58) (2.46%), Srikakulam (46) (1.95%), Vizag (32) (1.36%) and Viyanagaram (22) (0.94%) occupying last six ranks. The probable reason for more number of calls from the three districts was awareness among the farmers on the Farmers Call Centre services and their innovativeness to know recent technologies developed by the university. The other reason may be more irrigated area and commercial crops were predominant in these districts which insisted them to seek more recent information to cut down unnecessary expenses of cultivation. The least number of calls were recorded from north coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh. This

might be because of lack of awareness among farmers on existence of Farmers Call Centre to meet the information needs of the farmers. These findings are in conformity with that of Somyashree (2007) and Savithramma (2011).

Distribution of Calls received by Farmers Call Centre month wise during the year 2017

It could be inferred from the table 2 that maximum number of calls were received during the month of January (324) (13.76%), followed by February (263) (11.17%), December (254) (10.79%), September and November (221) (9.39%), October (217) (9.21%), June (192) (8.16%), July (176) (7.48%), August (160) (6.80%), April (127) (5.40%), March (103) (4.37%), the least number of calls were made during the month of May (96) (4.08%). The possible reason for more number of calls may be cropped area was more and the pest and disease incidence was more prevalent during these particular months. The least number of calls during March, April and May months indicates least cropped area during summer due to non availability of irrigation water.

Gender wise distribution of the calls received by Farmers Call Centre during the year 2017

The data depicted in table 3 indicates that great majority of the calls made were by male (96.30%), followed by very meager per cent (3.70%) by the females. This is because even though women were involved in majority of the farm operations, the decisions regarding crop, variety selection, fertilizer and pesticide purchase were taken by the male.

Season wise distribution of the calls received by Farmers Call Centre during the year 2017

It could be noticed from table 4 that maximum number of calls were received during the rabi season (54.33%), followed by Kharif season (31.82%) and summer season (13.85%). The probable reasons for more number of calls during rabi season may be alternate crop suitability due to non release of canal water, prevalence of more pest and diseases and drought situation. Farmers felt the necessity of making calls on such matters to obtain suitable solutions to increase their production and to get good price for their produce.

Crop wise distribution of calls received by the Farmers Call Centre during the year 2017

A cursory look at table 5 reveals that pulses occupied first rank (22.78%) with 747 farmers queries followed by cereals (658), vegetables (480), other aspects (477), commercial crops (348), oil seeds (299), fruits (173), flowers (46), forestry (37), medicinal plants (14). These findings were in line with Sharma *et al*

Table 1. Number of calls registered at FCC district-wise in Andhra Pradesh from January to December, 2017.

S.No	District	Number of calls registered at FCC	Per cent	Rank
1	Guntur	837	35.56	I
2	Krishna	265	11.26	II
3	Prakasam	218	9.26	III
4	SPSR Nellore	100	4.25	VIII
5	Chittore	152	6.46	VI
6	Anantapur	112	4.76	VII
7	Y.S.R Kadapa	158	6.71	V
8	Kurnool	210	8.92	IV
9	East Godavari	58	2.46	XI
10	West Godavari	84	3.57	IX
11	Srikakulam	46	1.95	XII
12	Vizayanagaram	22	0.94	XIV
13	Vizag	32	1.36	XIII
14	Others	60	2.54	X
	Total	2354	100	

Table 2. Month-wise calls registered at FCC from January to December, 2017.

S.No	Month	Number of calls received	Per cent	Rank
1	January	324	13.76	I
2	February	263	11.17	II
3	March	103	4.37	X
4	April	127	5.4	IX
5	May	96	4.08	XI
6	June	192	8.16	VI
7	July	176	7.48	VII
8	August	160	6.8	VIII
9	September	221	9.39	IV
10	October	217	9.21	V
11	November	221	9.39	IV
12	December	254	10.79	III
	Total	2354	100	

Table 3. Gender-wise calls made from January to December during 2017

S.No	Gender	Number of calls received	Per cent
1	Male	2267	96.3
2	Female	87	3.7
	Total	2354	100

Table 4: Season-wise calls registered at FCC from January to December 2017

Season	Number of calls	Per cent	Rank
Kharif (June to September)	749	31.82	II
Rabi (October to February)	1279	54.33	I
Summer (March to May)	326	13.85	III
Total	2354	100	

Table 5. Crop-wise calls attended by Farmers Call Centre

S.No	Crop	Number of calls	Per cent	Rank
1	Cereals	658	20.07	II
2	Pulses	747	22.78	I
3	Oil seeds	299	9.12	VI
4	Commercial crops	348	10.61	V
5	Vegetables	480	14.64	III
6	Fruits	173	5.28	VII
7	Flowers	46	1.4	VIII
8	Forestry	37	1.13	IX
9	Medicinal plants	14	0.43	X
10	Others	477	14.54	IV
	Total	3279	100	

Table 6. Component -wise calls attended by Farmers Call Centre

S.No	Component	Number of calls received	Per cent	Rank
1	Crop production	1232	37.57	II
2	Plant protection	1252	38.18	I
3	Loan, finance and subsidy information	199	6.07	III
4	Weather	96	2.93	VII
5	Marketing	88	2.68	VIII
6	Implements & farm machinery	154	4.70	IV
7	Animal Husbandry	121	3.69	VI
8	Others	137	4.18	V
	Total	3279	100	

(2011). The possible reason for more number of calls with respect to pulses, cereal, vegetables, commercial and oil seed crop cultivation might be the major area under these particular crop categories, more cost of cultivation involved and prevalence of more pest and disease incidence. These reasons insisted the farmers to get up to date information on cultivation of these crops.

Component wise distribution of calls received by the Farmers Call Centre during the year 2017

The data pertaining to the component wise distribution of calls was presented in table 6. It could be noticed from the table that majority of the queries of the farmers were on plant protection with highest number of calls (1252) occupying first rank with almost forty per cent (38.18%) share of the total calls. Next priority area of calls was crop production (1232 calls) which included varietal selection, sowing time, weed management, fertilizer management and irrigation aspects with 37.57 per cent. Farmers made 199 calls on loan, finance and subsidy information. One hundred and fifty four calls were made on implements and machinery followed by other aspects (137), animal husbandry (137), weather (96) and marketing (88). The occurrence of pests and diseases are most common and serious problems faced by farmers and knowledge of plant protection is very lacking and also perceived as necessary. Hence, more number of calls on pest and disease. Saravan *et al.*, (2008) reported that that most of the farmers need information on various topics such as pest management and disease management. Farmers need to update more information on high yielding varieties and hybrids, fertilizer management, recently released pre and post emergence herbicides, critical stages of irrigation to increase their production. This finding is in conformity with that of Somyashree (2007) and Savithramma (2011).

CONCLUSION

Majority of the calls were received from very few districts and from male farmers, hence there is every need to create awareness among farmers of all districts and in particular among the women farmers on existence of Farmers Call Centre to meet their information needs, through extension wing of Acharya N.G.Ranga Agricultural University. Majority of the information needs expressed by the farmers were related to plant protection, varietal selection, optimum sowing time, fertilizers recommended, herbicides and critical stages of irrigation. Hence, the extension wing of the university and state department of Agriculture will have to give greater attention to these aspects in designing training programmes and awareness programmes for benefit of farmers.

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