THE USE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AMONG FARMERS: A CASE STUDY OF RURAL KENYA.

Karen Musikoyo and Leah Mutanu.

Being paper presented at the East African Multidisciplinary Annual Research Conference (EAMARC1) between 12-14 November 2013 USIU Nairobi

ABSTRACT
This study sought to investigate the adoption of ICT among farmers in rural Kenya. The research questions adopted by the researcher were; is there usage and effects of ICT among the farmers. The study utilized a descriptive research design that targeted the whole population of USIU Agribusiness farmers totaling 80 farmers as at 15.04.2012. Random sampling was done where by the researcher used a sample size of 30 elements. The findings of this study indicate that majority of the farmers in rural Kenya do not use computers relatively. A large number of the farmers use ICT for communication and entertainment. The findings also show that the farmers, who use computers the most, still have a low income. In addition, this study found that most farmers use mobile phones for communication and information gathering. However, most farmers are willing to embrace ICT in agriculture, especially for record keeping, sourcing for market prices, and other relevant information. The major obstacles facing farmers’ adoption of ICT as identified by this study is financial constraints, lack of technological infrastructure, lack of skills/proper training in regards to ICT, and there are no forums for involvement. This study recommends the emphasis on the use of ICT for improved productivity and a proper cost benefit analysis to be performed, since investment in ICT can be costly. This is so because if a proper cost benefit analysis is not performed then the investment will not translate to an increase in productivity. Further to this, the building of more small information centers in the country through private/public partnerships and equip the centers with more ICTs for use by enterprise operators is necessary.