

## Representation of Agricultural Issues in South African Newspapers: A Content Analysis

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**ABSTRACT** In this study, five South African newspapers were analyzed using content analysis to ascertain their coverage of agricultural issues. A sample of 9,125 editions was collected for a period of five years between January 2009 and December 2013. The findings showed that the newspapers did not give significant prominence to agricultural issues such as land reform and youth in agriculture, as news related to business, politics and education enjoyed priority. On the other hand, food security, climate change and agricultural marketing were popular topics among the published articles about agriculture. The study suggests that more inspirational stories of farmers in agriculture are needed to create more awareness of agriculture and to motivate the youth to take up agriculture as an occupation.

### INTRODUCTION

The history of disseminating agricultural information in print media dates back to 1780, with the emergence of a variety of periodicals and newspapers that were specifically produced for farmers (Goddard 1983). The print media of that time can be divided into three distinct historical periods. The first period, between 1780 and 1815, witnessed a general interest in the improvement of agriculture. The second period encompassed the 1830s and 1840s and emphasized scientific farming with a strong political focus on agricultural matters. The third period took place after the 1870s and witnessed growth in specialist publications that catered for particular aspects of farming activities such as dairying, stockbreeding, poultry and agricultural machinery (Goddard 1983). Ever since, sporadic development has been observed in the way the print media influence the development of farming activities. This trend has continued with the establishment of numerous newspapers that disseminate agricultural issues as part of news, editorials, advertorials and columns. Significant progress has been noted in reporting on agriculture as a result of an increase in media participation (Apata 2010). Furthermore, the publication of newspapers in digital format in more recent years has also improved the accessibility of agricultural information.

Access to proven information remains an important factor of production for agricultural and rural development (Zijp 2002). Ariyo et al. (2013) affirm that information and communication are of crucial importance in facilitating the technology transfers that stimulate agricultural production. Newspapers and the information they contain support agricultural extension by communicating the technologies and information that relate to agricultural practices, government policies and market information. Okunade (2007) and Okorie and Oyedepo (2011) have observed that mass media play an important societal role by creating awareness, attracting attention, providing background information, as well as stimulating the interest and desire of farmers to gather more information on issues that have been raised in the media channels.

South Africa has a history of farming publications. Among these are publications such as the *Handbook for Farmers*, which was published in 1939 (Düvel and Koch 1991; Koch and Terblanché 2013). However, press freedom has had a chequered history in South Africa, with the second half of the twentieth century being overshadowed by the apartheid era. Correspondence on agricultural issues during that period was limited and channeled exclusively through alternative media. According to Magee (2013), the world media abound with story content that was changed in the event of national disasters, terrorist attacks and economic turmoil. This situation could be applied to South Africa as well

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in light of the repressive and authoritarian government that governed the country for almost five decades.

With the eradication of apartheid policies in 1994, government censorship was also abolished and a new constitution was enacted to guarantee freedom of expression for every citizen. The right of freedom was also transferred to the press and the media, artists and academics. Although the post-apartheid period has revived media coverage of agricultural issues, content analyses that relate to agricultural programs are still limited. Most content analyses on the South African media have concentrated on political affairs. This study, therefore, examined the way agriculture-related issues have been represented in the South Africa media in the current post-apartheid era.

### Theoretical Analysis

The study made use of the theory of agenda setting for theoretical understanding. The theory of agenda setting postulates that what is presented in the media sets the agenda for what the public considers to be important (McCombs and Shaw 1972). According to Coleman et al. (2009: 147), agenda setting is “the process of the mass media presenting certain issues frequently and prominently with the result that large segments of the public come to perceive those issues as more important than others...the more coverage an issue receives, the more important it is to people.”

A view on Lippmann’s (1922) perspective, elaborated by McCombs and Ghanem (2008), explains that the core idea revolving around agenda setting is the promotion of elements noticeable in the media’s pictures to become more prominent in the audience’s pictures. In the metaphorical language of the theory, the media’s agenda sets the public’s agenda (McCombs and Ghanem 2008). In a theoretical formulation, the agenda could be composed of any set of elements. The findings of McCombs and Ghanem (2008) in a study on agenda setting and public issues, for instance, indicate positive correlations between the degree of emphasis placed on issues in the mass media and the priority attached to these issues by the public. This theoretical proposition has remained consistent with the work of Dearing and Rogers (1996), Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006), Son and Weaver (2006), Kioussis et

al. (2006, 2013) and McComb (2005, 2013). Studies in agenda setting (see McCombs and Shaw 1972; Weaver 1977, 1991; Weaver et al. 1975; Weaver et al. 2004; Kioussis et al. 2013) have shown that media presentations affect public perceptions not only of the importance of certain issues, but also of which aspects of these issues are found to be important. The topics that are covered and the way they are presented are both reflected in public understanding and opinion making. Lippmann (1922) explains that the behavior underlying public opinion is a response to mental images of events, an imagined pseudo environment that is treated as if it were the real environment. Succinctly put, agenda setting can be regarded as a mechanism where the media sets the public agenda by suggesting what one thinks about, although it remains unclear exactly what to think (Freeland 2012).

Cohen (1963) made the observation that “the world will look different to different people depending on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors and publishers of the paper they read”. This raises two basic assumptions of agenda setting, which are the press and the media do not reflect reality, they filter and shape it, and media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues (Agenda Setting Theory 2012). Freeland (2012) posits that agenda setting occurs through a cognitive process known as ‘accessibility’, which implies that when an issue is covered more prominently it becomes more accessible in the audience’s memory (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). Or, as McCombs and Shaw (1972) put it, “people learn from the media what the important issues are.”

### Problem Statement and Research Aims

One of the most constraining factors to agricultural development in Africa is the limited access to agricultural information (Adekanye 1995). According to Oladeji (2011) and Olowu and Yahaya (1993), the newspaper coverage of agricultural and rural development has received little scholarly attention. The New Agriculturist (2009) observed that news reporting on agriculture is mostly limited to natural catastrophes, food shortages and rising prices. However, newspapers and print media have a high potential for promoting agricultural and rural development. They can provide a platform through which farm-

ers can access proven technologies and receive important information about farming in general. Literature on news coverage in relation to agriculture and how this can assist farmers has continued to remain scant in the South African context.

This study, therefore, analyzed the representation of agricultural issues in South African newspapers. The objectives of the study were to describe the frequency and the slant (direction) of common story topics covered by the South African newspapers, determine the volume of coverage of agricultural news and other areas of economic activity in the South African newspapers, and describe the volume of reportage given to each subsection of agricultural news in the South African newspapers.

### METHODOLOGY

Newspapers are characterized by a broad readership, a broad policy impact and reference to historical facts, thereby making newspapers a suitable unit of analysis for the aims of this research. Currently in South Africa there are about 188 newspapers in circulation. These are listed in the database of the University of Fort Hare, Sabinet reference (SABINET) under the South African media list of publications. Owing to the scope of this study, a purposive sampling method and the location of the publishing house were the criteria used for the newspaper selection.

Five newspapers, comprising two with national coverage and three with provincial coverage, were purposively selected as the unit of analysis. These included the *Business Day* (BD), which is South Africa's major business and financial daily newspaper, where the essence was to determine how agriculture is covered from the business angle. The *Times* (TIMES) is a national newspaper that is published in Johannesburg, the economic hub of South Africa. The *Daily Dispatch* (DD), the *Herald* (HRD) and the *Sowetan* (SWN) are provincial newspapers published in East London, Port Elizabeth and Soweto, respectively. The DD and HRD are located in the Eastern Cape, which includes the former homelands of Transkei and Ciskei, while the SWN is published in Soweto, the most populous city in South Africa. A total number of 9,125 editions were considered in the study, all published during a period of five consecutive years between January 2009 and December 2013.

A descriptive study design was applied to identify the frequency of agricultural news coverage. The specific content areas of agricultural news analyzed included those that could be directly attributed to the interests of various farmers including commercial, emerging and smallholders. The specific content areas used in the research were land reform, horticulture, livestock, forestry, climate change, farm management, food security, fishery, agricultural marketing, youth in agriculture, poultry and agricultural policy. Further comparative analyses of newspaper coverage were accomplished using 'agriculture' and 'farming' as two keywords that were cross-tabbed with sports, politics, foreign news, business, entertainment and education. In this research, a total of 170,557 news items were included in the study. The data was analyzed with SPSS using descriptive (frequency counts, means and percentages), correlation and paired-samples t-test statistics, which were conducted to evaluate the prominence given to agricultural news stories as opposed to political, education, business, foreign, sports and entertainment news stories.

### RESULTS

#### Topic Coverage per Newspaper

Business is a popular topic of every newspaper, especially in the BD (26.1%; n = 170, 557). Business [Biz] was also found to be a popular topic in the TIMES (6.17%; n = 170, 557), and to a lesser extent, in the DD (2.18%; n = 170, 557), the HRD (1.96%; n=170, 557), and the SWN (0.84%; n = 170, 557) (Table 1). The TIMES gave more prominence to political issues [PI] (1.64%; n = 170, 557), education [Ed] (3.95%; n = 170, 557), agriculture [Agr] (1.93%; n = 170, 557), entertainment [ETM] (0.38%; n = 170, 557) and foreign news [FN] (2.87%; n = 170, 557) than all the other newspapers examined (Table 1). It was found that agricultural news did not enjoy prominent coverage in any of the newspapers. Table 1 indicates that the TIMES (1.93%; n = 170, 557) devoted most attention to agricultural issues, with the other newspapers having a fairly low coverage rate as BD 1.79%): HRD (0.90%), dd (0.67%); and SWT (0.22%).

#### Newspaper Coverage per Topic

A second approach to interpreting the data is by looking at the way news is distributed be-

**Table 1: Topic coverage per newspaper by category**

	<i>DD</i>	%	<i>BD</i>	%	<i>SWN</i>	%	<i>HRD</i>	%	<i>Times</i>	%	<i>Total</i>	%
Sports	1631	0.95	1735	1.02	494	0.29	1937	1.14	2811	1.64	8608	5.0
PI	8520	4.99	14573	8.54	4818	2.82	7005	4.1	17707	10.4	52623	30.9
FN	648	0.38	6487	3.8	339	0.20	813	0.48	4909	2.87	13196	7.7
Biz	3723	2.18	44456	26.1	1435	0.84	3341	1.96	10525	6.17	63480	37.3
ETM	300	0.18	535	0.31	91	0.05	334	0.20	648	0.38	1908	1.1
Edu	4282	2.51	4679	2.74	2082	1.22	3552	2.08	6745	3.95	21340	12.5
Agr.	1148	0.67	3056	1.79	369	0.22	1532	0.90	3297	1.93	9402	5.5
	20252	11.9	75521	44.3	9628	5.67	18514	10.9	46642	27.3	170557	100

Key: DD – Daily Dispatch; BD – Business Day; SWN – Sowetan; HRD – Herald; PI- Political issues; FN- Foreign news, Biz - Business ETM - Entertainment; Edu- Education; Agr - Agriculture

tween the newspapers based on absolute numbers. The findings show that agricultural news was given the most attention by the TIMES (35.1%) and the BD (32.5%), followed by the HRD (16.3%), the DD (12.2%) and the SWN (3.9%). In comparison with foreign news, agricultural news was given less coverage by the TIMES (35.10%), and BD (49.2%). However, the TIMES gave fair distributions in coverage to agriculture (35.1%), entertainment (34.0%), education (31.6%), politics (33.7%) and sports (32.7%) than any other newspapers examined (Table 2).

Table 4 presents the paired-samples t-test conducted to compare the coverage given to political news and agricultural news. A significant

difference was found between the scores for political news coverage (M = 10524.60, SD 5407.1) and agricultural news coverage (M = 1880.4, SD = 1258.06, t(4) = 4.595, p = 0.010). The same significant differences were observed for education news stories (M = 4268.00, SD = 1702.63) and agricultural news coverage (M = 1880.4, SD = 1258.06), t(4) = 6.318, p = 0.003). There were also significant differences in the scores for entertainment news stories (M = 381.60, SD 216.72) and agricultural news coverage (M = 1880.4, SD = 1258.06), t(4) = -3.206, p = 0.033). These results suggest that the newspapers gave more prominence to political, education and entertainment news stories than agricultural news stories. However, no significant relationship was

**Table 2: Newspaper coverage per topic**

<i>Topical issues</i>	<i>DD</i>	<i>BD</i>	<i>SWN</i>	<i>HRD</i>	<i>TIMES</i>	%
Sports	18.95	20.16	5.74	22.50	32.66	100
Political issues	16.19	27.69	9.16	13.31	33.65	100
Foreign news	4.91	49.16	2.57	6.16	37.20	100
Business	5.86	70.03	2.26	5.26	16.58	100
Entertainment	15.72	28.04	4.77	17.51	34.00	100
Education	20.07	21.93	9.76	16.64	31.61	100
Agric.	12.21	32.50	3.92	16.30	35.10	100

Key: DD - Daily Dispatch; BD - Business Times; SWN - Sowetan; HRD - Herald

**Table 3: Correlation between agricultural news and other categories of economic news**

	<i>Sports</i>	<i>PI</i>	<i>FN</i>	<i>Biz</i>	<i>ETM</i>	<i>Edu</i>	<i>Agr.</i>
Sports	1						
PI	.798	1					
FN	.543	.898*	1				
Biz	.178	.583	.863	1			
ETM	.899*	.965**	.854	.558	1		
Edu	.917*	.925*	.667	.250	.921	1	
Agr	.816	.965**	.927*	.672	.984**	.857	1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

found in the coverage of business, foreign news and sports, as opposed to the coverage of agricultural news stories.

**Agriculture Coverage in Categories**

It is also important to examine the coverage of agricultural issues. Twelve categories were used in this research, as presented in Table 5.

Food security was covered mostly by the SWN (22.1%), followed by the DD (20.0%), the HRD (16.2%), the TIMES (15.6%) and the BD (12.0%). Climate change was given most coverage by the BD (19.0%), followed by the TIMES (14.7%), the HRD (14.2%), the SWN (9.6%) and the DD (9.2%). Agricultural marketing also enjoyed some level of coverage in the BD (18.8%), the HRD (14.5%), the TIMES (11.2%) and the DD (11.0%) when compared with issues like land reform (Table 5). The news on farm management was carried mainly by the HRD (17.7%) followed by the DD (15.5%), the SWN (12.7%), the TIMES

(12.4%) and the BD (6.8%). News stories on land reform were given prominence by the SWN (14.1%) followed by the DD (13.3%), the BD (11.3%), the HRD (8.3%) and the TIMES (10.2%). Agricultural policy issues were covered mostly by the BD (13.8%), followed by the TIMES (10.6%), the DD (7.6%), the HRD (7.0%) and the SWN (6.3%). Youth in agriculture was given low coverage, as revealed by the SWN at 6.4 percent, the DD at 3.8 percent, the HRD at 2.6 percent, the TIMES at 2.3 percent and the BD at 2.0 percent. Newspaper stories on the topic of poultry were carried most by the BD (2.9%), followed by the HRD (1.6%), the SWN (1.4%), the DD (1.3%) and the TIMES (1.2%). Livestock coverage was also given little prominence, with the DD giving only 9.1 percent coverage followed by the HRD (5.8%), the SWN (5.4%), the TIMES (2.7%) and the BD (1.7%). Horticulture was poorly reported by all the newspapers studied, with the TIMES (0.7%) having the highest coverage, followed by the BD and the HRD (0.4%) and the

**Table 4: Paired-sample t-test of agricultural news with politics, business, education, and foreign, sports and entertainment news coverage**

Outcomes	M	SD	M for agric	SD for agric	95% CI for mean diff.	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed)
PI	10524.6	5407.11	1880.4	1258.065	8644.2, 4149.053	4.595	4	.010*
Biz	12696	18084.88	1880.4	1258.065	10815.6, 16826.8	1.401	4	0.234
Edu	4268	1702.63	1880.4	1258.065	2387.6, 444.57	6.318	4	.003*
FN	2639.2	2852.55	1880.4	1258.065	758.8, 1594.94	0.969	4	0.387
Sports	1721.6	828.94	1880.4	1258.065	-158.8, -429.12	-0.472	4	0.662
ETM	381.6	216.72	1880.4	1258.065	-1498.8, -1041.34	-3.206	4	.033*

**Table 5: Agricultural topic coverage per newspaper, in relative numbers**

	DD	%	BD	%	SWN	%	HRD	%	Times	%	Total	%
Land ref.	0	1.3	635	4.62	81	0.59	138	1.0	470	3.42	1501	10.93
Horticulture	2	0.02	21	0.15	2	0.015	6	0.04	31	0.23	62	0.45
Livestock	122	0.89	94	0.68	31	0.23	96	0.7	124	0.9	467	3.4
Forestry	83	0.6	370	2.7	34	0.25	114	0.83	409	2.97	1010	7.35
Climate change	123	0.89	1069	7.9	55	0.4	236	1.7	677	4.9	2160	15.79
Farm mgt.	207	1.5	381	2.8	73	0.54	293	2.13	570	4.15	1524	11.12
Food security	267	1.94	675	4.91	127	0.92	268	1.95	716	5.21	2053	14.93
Fishery	36	0.26	227	1.65	36	0.26	81	0.59	431	3.14	811	5.9
Agric. marketing	147	1.07	1062	7.73	54	0.39	241	1.75	515	3.75	2019	14.69
Youth in agric.	51	0.37	113	0.82	37	0.26	43	0.31	107	0.78	351	2.54
Poultry	18	0.13	162	1.18	8	0.06	26	0.19	55	0.4	269	1.96
Agric. policy	101	0.73	775	5.64	36	0.26	116	0.84	487	3.54	1515	11.01
	1334	9.69	5584	40.78	574	4.175	1658	12.03	4592	33.39	13742	100

DD – Daily Dispatch; BD – Business Day; SWN – Sowetan; HRD – Herald

SWN (0.3%), while the DD had very low coverage at only 0.1 percent.

### DISCUSSION

The findings of this research in regard to agricultural coverage corroborate the findings of earlier studies from other countries that suggest low coverage of agricultural news by newspapers. For example, several authors indicate that the Nigerian newspapers give poor coverage on stories about agriculture and rural development (Okorie and Oyedepo 2011; Aiyesimoju and Awoniyi 2012; Awojobi and Adeokun 2012; Ovwigho and Orogun 2013; Oyekunle et al. 2013). The findings of Njoroge (2012) relating to two Kenyan newspapers also indicate poor coverage of agricultural issues. Studies of Indian newspapers content have also concluded that agricultural news was poorly attended to by all the categories of Indian newspapers (Mishra and Verma 1998; Sharma et al. 2003). The study of Oladele and Boage (2011) in Botswana also corroborates earlier findings and reports, although Oladele and Boago (2011) reported significant coverage of agricultural news by the privately owned newspapers published in the local language of Setswana, which enjoy a wide readership. However, debates around poor coverage of agricultural news by newspapers have remained focused on contemporary discussions among stakeholders. Some of the issues discussed include the commercial orientation of media publishers (Awojobi and Adeokun 2012), poor training relating to development communicators, organizational problems and a general lack of interest in agricultural news by journalists (Oyekunle et al. 2013), poor infrastructure in media houses, lack of equipment, and lack of education on agriculture activities on the part of journalists, which results in poor output (Solomon 2009) amongst other things.

Table 3 shows a positive correlation between agricultural stories and sports (.816), politics (.965\*\*), foreign news (.927\*), business (.672), entertainment (.984\*\*) and education (.857) stories. This implies that the more prominence that is given to stories on agricultural news, the more the prominence that is given to stories on all other economic news items. No special treatment was given to agricultural news stories in any of the five newspapers analyzed in the study. This finding is at variance with that of Ovwigho

and Orogun (2013), who reported a negative correlation between agriculture and sports news, politics and education, in a Nigerian tabloid (the *Pointer*). If South African newspapers could give more prominence to agricultural news, it could reawaken youth interest in agriculture, whose love of farming would seem to be on the wane. This has been exacerbated by the past neglect of black farmers who are currently struggling to break into commercial farming.

At the same time, an observation can be made on the ways certain categories of news were covered by the two national papers (TIMES and BD) and the three provincial newspapers (DD, SWN and HRD). In Table 5, it can be seen that food security issues were given more prominence by the local newspapers than the national newspapers. The same trend is observed for topics on youth in agriculture and farm management. By extension, the local newspapers focused more on the needs of their target readership. This is an effective way of calling the attention of government to the prevailing socioeconomic conditions common to the local people and in the rural areas.

The findings also indicate that most newspapers gave very poor coverage of topical issues on agriculture. For instance, few of the news stories celebrated successes within agriculture that could motivate the youth to take up farming, as done with sports and entertainment. In addition, news stories on agricultural topics such as horticulture, livestock, farm management, agricultural marketing and poultry were also poorly covered, as media coverage of these issues with the required emphasis could trigger interest and stimulate curiosity among the youth. According to McCombs and Ghanem (2008), there is a positive correlation between the degree of emphasis placed on issues in the mass media and the priority attached to them by the public. Studies by Kioussis et al. (2013) have also shown that media presentations affect public perceptions not only regarding the importance of certain issues, but also as to which aspects of these issues are important. Therefore, if these areas are well covered and articulated in the newspapers from an entrepreneurial perspective, it could be a motivating factor for the youth to take up agriculture as a profession.

Land matters remain contentious in the pages of South African tabloids. Issues on land reform are still eliciting and generating the 'hurt

heart' discussion. According to Walker (2003), land issues are at the "heart of the South Africans' quest for liberation from political oppression, rural poverty and underdevelopment". Land reform did not, it was found, enjoy well-documented coverage from the three local tabloids, unlike their national counterparts (Table 5). These findings are consistent with the study of Genis (2006), which concluded that some South African newspapers have given scant or no detailed coverage on land reform.

The findings also revealed that all the local newspapers commonly covered articles on food security, while the topic of climate change attracted more coverage from the national newspapers. This may be because climate change has received more global awareness, as it is directly impacting the way the public is experiencing climate-related events such as excessive cold and floods. These findings are consistent with those of Mare (2011) in the context of Zimbabwe, and Ukou et al. (2012) in their study of Nigerian newspapers. In a study in the Spanish media context, Lopera and Moreno (2014) reported that the press concentrated mainly on the consequences of climate change rather than on what causes it or on natural resources.

Youth in agriculture received poor coverage from all the newspapers (Table 5). The Global Risk 2014 report by the World Economic Forum (WEF) has indicated that South Africa has the third highest unemployment rate worldwide for people aged between 15 and 24. As the findings of Mathiyha (2013) have shown, factors that militate against youth participation in agriculture include a shortage of information and a lack of visible change from rural subsistence farming into commercially viable farming initiatives. Therefore, the newspapers could play a significant role here by writing and sharing stories that could motivate and stimulate youth interest in agriculture. Other topical issues such as farm management, agricultural policy and reform were given more prominence. However, on average, the *TIMES* gave more prominence to agricultural issues than any of the other newspapers reviewed. These agricultural issues include climate change, farm management, food security, fishery, agricultural marketing, agricultural policy and land reform (Table 5).

## CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the content of five South African newspapers by looking at the stories

most frequently covered in relation to agricultural news. The findings indicated that all newspapers had generally poor coverage of agricultural news and topical agricultural issues for the period reviewed. All of the newspapers gave more prominence to issues related to business, politics and education. The *TIMES*, however, had more balanced news coverage than the other newspapers except in business news coverage, which fell below that of the *BD* coverage.

Poor coverage of topical issues relating to agriculture by the newspapers was also noted. However, prominent coverage was given to issues concerning climate change, food security and agricultural marketing. Land reform, which has been a critical and contested issue in the history of South Africa, did not enjoy adequate coverage as envisaged. Moreover, stories related to the youth in agriculture were also underreported.

The challenge of attaining economic prosperity is enormous when placed alongside food security and such prosperity could be compromised if the variables analyzed are not factored well into the national development plan. The media, which is often referred to as the fourth estate, has a significant role to play in informing, mobilizing and reporting well-structured and balanced information. Accordingly, all stakeholders could be effectively mobilized for collective action-oriented participatory economic support, using the power of the media in agenda setting.

In addition, the South African situation is still clouded with future uncertainties in terms of the high level of youth unemployment and the 'albatross' land reform debacle. The newspapers (as the public mouthpiece) could play an important role in public discussion on agricultural issues that are vital to the economic development and social stabilization of the nation. This debate could serve as an eye-opener for the youth to see the opportunities inherent in agro-entrepreneurial farming activities. Furthermore, emphasizing farming/agriculture, as is done for sports and entertainment, with special columns in newspapers, more agribusiness-related articles, together with features and special columns that are directed at the youth, could go a long way in motivating and stimulating youth interest in farming.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The authors of this paper suggest that newspapers should give more attention to agricultur-

al news together with inspirational stories of farmers, which could motivate the youth to take up agriculture as an occupation. Special prominence should be given to agriculture in the same way as is currently done on the sport pages of newspapers. This would require newspaper publishers to employ agricultural journalists who would give more accurate and efficient coverage of agricultural news. Finally, there should be a more equitable distribution of stories across other socioeconomic issues of agricultural and rural development, not merely in times of disasters and food crises.

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