Cost Considerations in Mounting Farmer Field Schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

David Dolly
Jeet Ramjattan
Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension.
School of Agriculture,
University of the West Indies.
Saint Augustine
Trinidad and Tobago
Telephone: 1-868-662-2002 Ext 3206
Fax: 1-868-662-8355
farmdavid42@hotmail.com

Abstract
This paper investigates cost factors in mounting Farmer Field Schools (FFS) in Trinidad and Tobago. With the use of various project accounts and field records the paper will assess the cost of conducting the FFS in several Extension districts in Trinidad and Tobago. These costs will be compared with the cost of mounting other selected farmer education programmes. There will be an account of the cost of appropriate IPM practices, farmer field practices and recommended farmer practices. The paper will conclude whether it is possible to reduce the cost of pesticides with the use of technologies which have emerged from the FFS.

Preliminary analysis suggests a cost advantage with the use of Integrated Pest Management. The cost per farmer participant is similar to reported cost in several parts of Asia. Yet the cost compares with that of mounting a routine technology transfer programme within the government service. There are opportunities to reduce the cost of production among the new technologies which have emerged from the Farmer Field School.

There are implications if a country’s investment in a new educational method does not justify its cost. Given the other positive impacts of the FFS, this study will provide ways of counteracting any negative financial outcomes from its implementation in Trinidad and Tobago. The study will also instruct further improvements in positive economic impacts.

Keyword: Cost Reduction Impact, FFS Technologies