An Exploratory Study on the Extension Education Roles of the National Cashew Association of Nigeria (NCAN)

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Introduction  A notable feature of cashew-nut of Nigerian origin is the general complaints of its poor quality. This often leads to considerable price discounts or utter rejection in the international markets, leading to a glut of cashews in Nigeria and decline in export earnings. The blame for grower dissension in the Nigerian cashew industry is on a number of factors including a lack of organization and direction on the part of the NCAN. The association which is the only umbrella under which all stakeholders gather, and a central body responsible for coordinating all aspects of the cashew trade from production, processing and finally to exports, has been blamed for not providing timely information and education on quality requirements in import markets to its members especially farmers and local cashew collectors.

Purpose and Major Points to be Shared  This poster presentation explores the operations of NCAN as a representative body in providing information for, and meeting the educational needs of, its members. Specifically, the study explored the various efforts of the association in providing timely and needed information to its stakeholders. Likewise, the methods of marketing the programs of the association are considered. The mission and objectives of the association, benefits of membership, role of the Nigerian government in aiding the association and major constraints facing it were investigated. Data for this study were gathered from careful review of documents from the association, newspapers and interviews with high-ranking officials of the association.

Conclusion  This study concludes that although extension education was not the main reason behind the establishment of this association, it has been performing this role in a number of ways. Organizing conferences that address the issues and challenges facing its members, printing bulletins on the quality requirements of cashews in the international markets and seeking foreign buyers for its members are examples of the services the NCAN provides. It is worth noting that the ratio of extension agents to farmers in Nigeria is about one to more than a thousand, therefore, if the programs of the association are well targeted and marketed, they can reduce the dependence of the members especially farmers on the extension agents, and may bridge the gap between research and stakeholders in the cashew economy.

Educational Importance  In order to make accurate suggestions, prescriptions and recommendations on how to improve the association, it is important to investigate its current efforts, activities and operations of the association. This study provides insight on the need to strengthen and assist NCAN through capacity building, creating awareness on the benefit of the association among stakeholders, providing linkages with the Nigerian Extension Services and cashew associations in other producing nations and the establishment of a research and extension unit within the association.