

## **Potential to receive agricultural information through internet radio: a case of flower growers in Matale district in Sri Lanka**

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Krushu FM is an internet radio initiated in 2013 by the Department of Agriculture to broadcast agricultural radio programmes via internet. Since the web-radio is still at its inception, it is necessary to explore effective mechanisms in using the web radio in agriculture information dissemination. The potential to use internet radio among flower growers in *Matale* district was studied.

Before and after study design was used. Preliminary data was collected from the study community using a questionnaire (n=115) to study the awareness of Krushi FM and the potential to access the internet radio. After the first survey, farmers were formally informed on the Krushi FM. Thirty farmers were purpose fully selected after the introduction, based on the availability of smart phones and computer-based internet access and telephone interviews conducted after one week.

According to the findings a few respondents (4.39%) were aware of Krushi FM before the formal introduction, while none of the respondent had listen to the internet radio at this stage. Nearly 37% of the respondents could access internet at home. Most (67%) had internet access via personal computers such as laptops and desktops while some (33%) had internet access through smart phones. About 42.98% of the respondents had moderate to high familiarity with internet usage.

After the awareness programme 37% of the sample had listened to the Krushi FM, and all of them had listened through an android application developed by the Department of Agriculture. Nearly 50% of these listeners had listened using smart phones that belonged to their family members.

The listeners were generally interested in Krushi FM to receive agricultural programmes. The main problems faced by the listeners were poor internet signals, lack of time to listen to it, poor internet literacy, and cost involvement when listening through internet. The study concluded that there is a potential to promote Kurshi FM among flower growers in *Matale* district, due to internet availability and familiarity. Android application can be considered as the best way to listen to the web radio.