

## Maize Farmers' Perception of Sharp Practices among Agro-Input Dealers in Ibadan/Ibarapa Agricultural Zone, Oyo State

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**Abstract :** Fake and substandard agricultural inputs pose a serious stumbling block to farm productivity and subsequently improved livelihood. There is, therefore, a need to pave ways for sustainable agriculture and self-sufficiency in food production by proffering solutions to this challenge. Maize farmers' perception of sharp practices among agro-input dealers in Ibadan/Ibarapa agricultural zone in Oyo state was therefore investigated. A multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select registered maize farmers in the Ibadan/Ibarapa agricultural zone of the Oyo State Agricultural Development Programme (OYSADEP). A structured questionnaire was used to collect information on the perception of sharp practices and the effects of sharp practices. A total of seventy-five maize farmers were interviewed. A focus group discussion was organized to identify ways of curbing sharp practices to complement the survey. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Chi-square, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Forms of sharp practices indicated were sales of expired fertilizers, expired pesticides, expired herbicides, underweight fertilizers, adulterated fertilizers, adulterated herbicides, packs containing broken seeds, infested seeds, lack of truth in labeling/wrong labels, manipulation of measuring scales, and false declaration of hectares covered by tractor operators. The majority had unfavorable perception of agro-input dealers on sharp practices. A significant relationship was observed between respondents' level of education and their perception of sharp practices. There were no significant relationships between respondents' sex, marital status and religion, and their perception of sharp practices. A significant correlation exists between the forms of sharp practices and the perceived effect on agricultural production. It is concluded that the perceived effect of sharp practices was critical and the endemic culture of sharp practices prevailed in agro-input in Ibadan/Ibarapa agricultural zone. A standard regulatory system that will certify and monitor the quality of inputs should be put in place.

**Keywords :** agricultural productivity, agro-input dealers, maize farmers, sharp practices

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