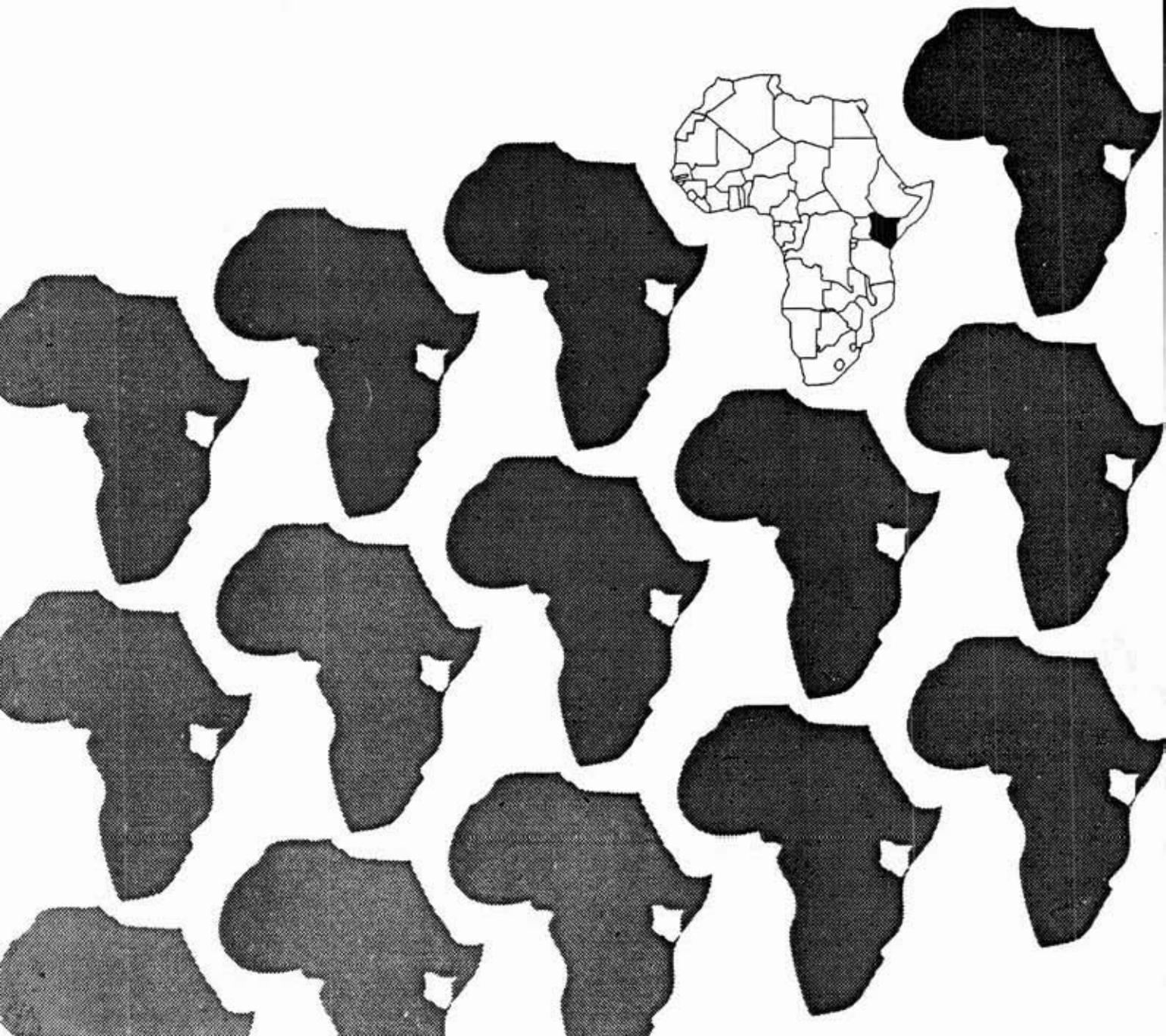


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# **Extension Communication Manual for Front-Line Agricultural Extension Staff**





# **Extension Communication Manual for Front-Line Agricultural Extension Staff**

**By John Fox**

**1990**



**Prepared for the On-Farm Grain Storage Project**

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**DPRA Incorporated  
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To achieve the government's objective of food self-sufficiency, Kenya's farmers must increase food production and ensure its proper preservation in order to satisfy the rapidly increasing population. The On-Farm Grain Storage Project, sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture, is introducing improved grain storage management technology to the small-scale farmers. One of the efforts of achieving this aim is through the reduction of losses to rodents, birds, moulds and insects. These losses, which could reach 25% or more, occur in farms from the time grain reaches maturity in the field until it is consumed.

The project was initiated in 1983 using the regular agricultural extension services to disseminate the technologies to the farmers. The field extension workers are expected to accomplish this by working with individuals, and sometimes by organizing field days attended by large groups of farmers.

Having only a minimum of training in extension communication skills, few reference materials, and practically no visual aids, some of the Agricultural Assistants have not been able to communicate the project's and other messages as effectively as the Ministry would like. The Ministry hopes, therefore, that through this extension communication manual, the effectiveness of the front-line extensions workers will be significantly increased.

This manual will also be useful at the Institutes of Agriculture, which are responsible for training the future frontline agricultural extension workers.

*E. K. Kandie*  
*Director of Agriculture*

# Preface

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The On-Farm Grain Storage Project is pleased to make this extension communication manual available to Kenya's Ministry of Agriculture. It is hoped that this practical guide will serve Kenya's front-line agricultural extension staff for many years.

The front-line workers are general agriculturalists and they must deliver information to farmers on a wide range of subjects. Their effectiveness in this task depends both on their knowledge of their subjects and on their ability to communicate with farmers.

The author speaks directly to the front-line workers. And the suggested methods and techniques should have application in the communication of subjects across the full range of agricultural extension—not just post-harvest management. Likewise, the information contained in the manual should be of use to those educational institutions which train Kenya's agricultural extension staff. Also, the manual will have relevance for extension staff in other countries.

The author, John Fox, has nearly thirty years experience in adult education and extension communication. He has taught communication skills, conducted research programmes, produced simulations and games, video training tapes and previous handbooks on communication. He has over ten years of work experience with various professional groups in Kenya and other African countries. He spent two years teaching communication and adult education skills at the University of Nairobi's Adult Studies Centre, Kikuyu.

In preparation for this manual, John Fox accompanied front-line extension workers on their daily farm visits to gain close, first hand experience of their work routines and interactions with farmers—and he has attended numerous project field days in western Kenya.

The chapters follow a logical pattern. The first five explore the case for employing a discussion and action-based methodology in extension work; the following chapters show how this methodology can be applied in a variety of situations and formats.

The agricultural extension workers who read this manual will find guidelines and checklists for individual application. But the manual also contains material that can be adapted for role playing and discussions in training groups.

*Dr. Walter G. Heid, Jr*  
*Team Leader, DPRA*  
*On-Farm Grain Storage Project*

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# *Introduction*

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This manual is addressed to front-line agricultural extension workers—agricultural assistants primarily, but also to other divisional or district level staff who are engaged in face-to-face communication with farmers.

It is about communication skills—those skills which make all the difference between success or failure in the extension worker's efforts to encourage farmers to increase their production and improve their quality of life.

It has been written in support of the Kenya Ministry of Agriculture's campaign to reduce serious grain losses by advocating and demonstrating efficient post-harvest pest-control and storage techniques. So the examples of technical topics are drawn mainly from these fields. But the information and advice on communication processes contained in this manual will be relevant for the full range of agricultural extension messages—and it should also be applicable in countries other than Kenya.

The manual begins with a discussion of some fundamental factors influencing communication. It reviews the functions and responsibilities of the front-line workers and identifies the key communication competencies they need for effective job performance. It considers the position of the farmers themselves, explores the conditions under which they will be prepared to consider and accept changes in their habitual ways of doing things. It returns to the extension workers and analyzes the means by which they can influence the motivation and receptiveness of the farmers.

The manual then takes up in turn the main kinds of communication activity—visiting a farm, speaking in public, giving a demonstration, leading a group discussion—and identifies the factors which

## ***Introduction***

can lead to a successful performance on each of these different occasions.

The intention has been to make the writing as relevant and practical as possible, by giving illustrations based on actual field experience and by including checklists which relate directly to the various tasks of the extension worker's everyday work routine.

Although the word "he" is used throughout this manual for the sake of stylistic simplicity, the author and the project are well aware that in many cases, in Kenya and in other countries, the front-line extension worker may well be a woman and working with women farmers as well as with men. So, whenever the words like "he" appear, please assume "he/she" or "his/hers".

### **AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION: A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

In writing this guide for front-line workers, a number of basic assumptions have influenced what has been said about extension methods:

1. Extension becomes most effective when there is a three-way interactive communication between research agencies, the front-line field workers and the farmers.
2. Effective extension starts where the farmers are and seeks to build on their established knowledge and skills.
3. Effective extension utilizes the knowledge and skills of farmers.
4. Effective extension is addressed to the practice of farming and, therefore, it employs active, problem-centred and discussion-based methods of communication.

## What Is Communication?

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*Kilonzo was quite new to the extension service. It was mid July, and he was visiting one of his contact farmers in a location some twenty kilometres from Kisumu by the shore of Lake Victoria.*

*A few weeks previously he had attended an orientation course for agricultural assistants (AA's) on post-harvest and grain management techniques—part of a programme in Western Kenya to get across extension messages related to reducing the losses being experienced by small-scale farmers in the handling of their maize crops.*

*It was harvest time; and one of the objectives of the campaign was to encourage farmers to harvest early, when the maize was mature enough—rather than leave it in the shamba to dry—where it would be susceptible to damage by insects, birds and rodents.*

*Armed with his leaflets explaining when and how to harvest, where and how to store the grain, Kilonzo felt confident that he had something to tell and teach his farmer. When they met, he came straight to the point. He produced his leaflets, explained the purpose of the new campaign and showed the farmer the illustration in the leaflet on how to test for when the maize is ready for harvesting. He looked around the compound and saw four traditional basket stores—all low to the ground and smeared with dung.*

*He showed the farmer a drawing of such a basket raised a metre above the ground, fitted with simple rat guards made from Kimbo tins and clean of mud or dung—so that the wind could blow through the woven structure and dry the grain more quickly.*

*The farmer looked and listened and nodded. He seemed to agree with all Kilonzo had said—and all that was printed in the leaflet. But then he asked a question:*

*“In the neighbouring locations a few farmers have been given a new kind of crib—bigger than these stores of mine and square and made of wood. Such a crib looks very fine in the compound. Why can't I be given one like that?”*









































































































































































































































































