

working draft #3

e. Advising research colleagues of problems encountered by farmers and facilitating opportunities for the researchers to observe them. This includes inviting research colleagues to travel with them to observe field problems or to take part in programs with extension personnel and farmers.

f. Communicating with related organizations in their subject matter field to facilitate linkage and coordination, especially suppliers and marketing firms who can advise on problems as well as help pass on information to their clients.

g. Backstopping agents as they encounter problems in the field and providing appropriate remedial training. No matter how well trained they are, field extension workers will encounter problems beyond their capacity. It is the responsibility of TL&S personnel to help field personnel deal with those problems.

h. Monitoring experiences of farmers and programs in agricultural development. Following up with agents and farmers to get reactions to new technology and to identify new problems the farmers have observed is a critical part of the specialist's job.

Are there any special things to keep in mind in deploying TL&S personnel?

The employment of even a well trained TL&S staff does not guarantee effective performance of the role. A number of things need to be planned to facilitate performance.

Research and extension missions. The missions of these organizations should specifically state a policy of mutual support and liaison as well as the objective, common to both of providing farmers with improved technology. All staff of each organization must be aware of the organizational mission. Such policies should provide for both formal and informal assistance and lateral as well as vertical liaison. That is, all staff need to view personnel of the other organization as "family", and give their needs priority attention. This joint decision by the Directors of both organizations to set a favorable environment for linkage and mutual support is one key to successful performance of these mutually dependent functions.

Mobility. Mobility for TL&S staff who must relate to many groups outside, as well as the extension staff per se, is of paramount importance. Such personnel are scarce in most countries and travel time is not very productive. Project design teams need to provide for the mobility required by the job description. There is a tendency to cut back everything equally when cuts must be made in budgets. These personnel, in a large measure, determine the content and technical quality of the whole organization and if they are not able to perform, the quality of extension's performance will suffer.