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The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



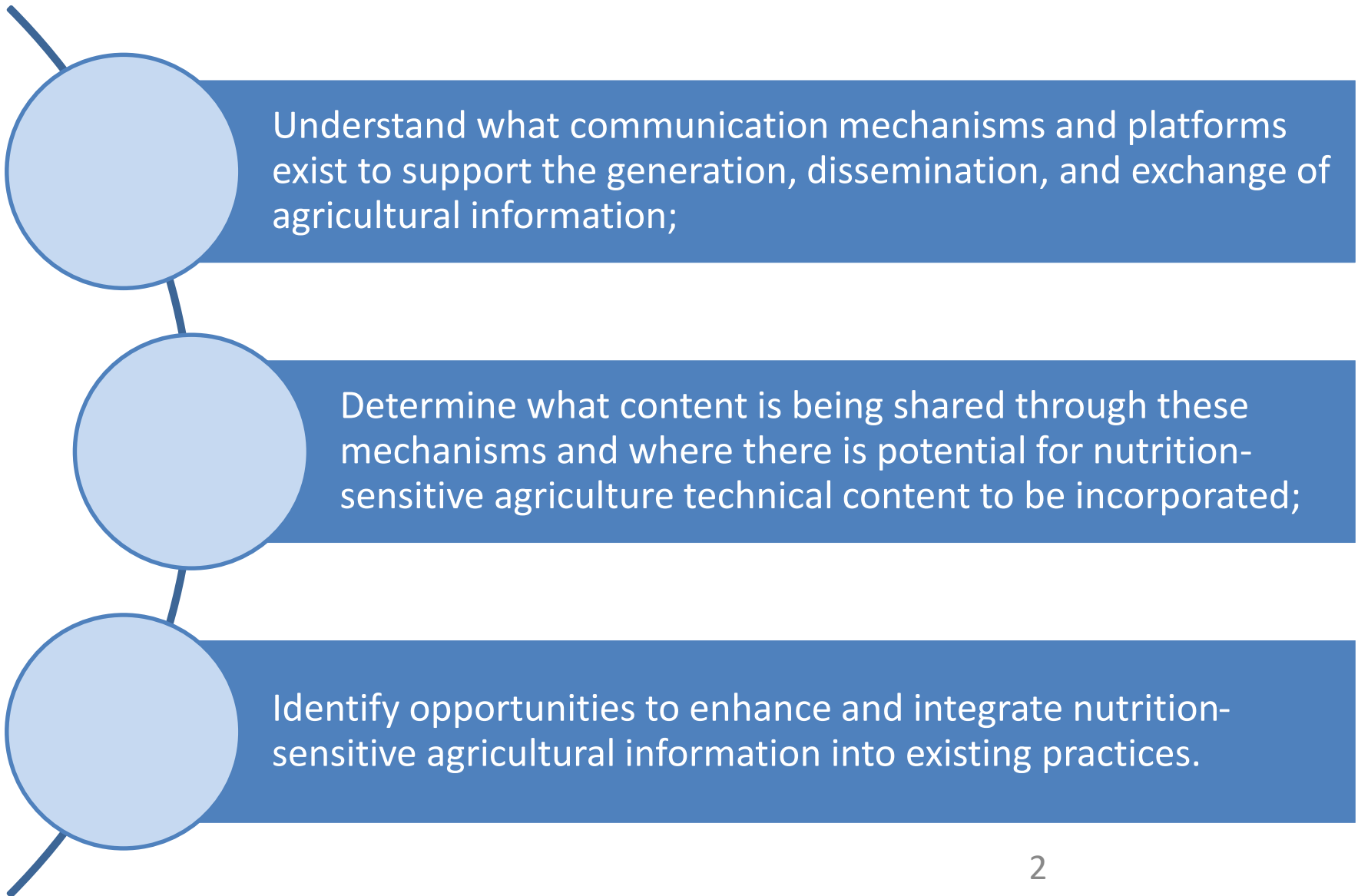
Opportunities for Integrating Nutrition into Agricultural Information Systems in Northern Ghana

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SPRING
Strengthening Partnerships, Results
and Innovations in Nutrition Globally

A vertical diagram consisting of three light blue circles connected by a dark blue line. Each circle is positioned to the left of a dark blue horizontal bar containing white text. The circles are slightly offset to the left, creating a staggered effect. The top circle is connected to the top bar, the middle circle to the middle bar, and the bottom circle to the bottom bar. The line starts from the top left, goes down to the first circle, then up to the second, then down to the third, and finally down to the bottom left.

Understand what communication mechanisms and platforms exist to support the generation, dissemination, and exchange of agricultural information;

Determine what content is being shared through these mechanisms and where there is potential for nutrition-sensitive agriculture technical content to be incorporated;

Identify opportunities to enhance and integrate nutrition-sensitive agricultural information into existing practices.

Government

- disseminates technical info from and through MOFA technical directorates, WIAD; CSIR-SARI; EPA; CSIR-FRI; GSA; many others

NGOs

- may collaborate with MOFA AEAs, WIAD, etc.; no formal content approval process

International research organizations

- collaborate with government and research institutions; larger generator of content

Private sector

- extension services

ICT service providers

- most common media is SMS or voice messaging over smart phones; employ technical experts to draft content



Public extension services

Led by MOFA AEs; rely on external funding

Farmer-to-Farmer comm

led by community extension volunteers; greater opportunity to target women when volunteers are women/targeting women's groups

Private sector business networks

out-grower farmer scheme; opportunity for leverage

Financial services and livelihood activities

complement economics and savings activities with education on finance, agriculture, or nutrition

ICT

radio, SMS, call-in centers, interactive voice response services, video



mNutrition:

- only ICT mechanism that integrates production, harvest, and nutrition-related info into one service.

Farm Radio International:

- promotes production and consumption of OFSP through participatory radio campaigns

Farmerline:

- provides SMS on the nutritional value of soybeans

- 1. A diversity of actors across the value chain are already promoting agricultural information.**
 - Value chain actors represent underutilized potential for promoting nutrition-sensitive ag messages and practices
 - Must reduce transaction costs of message delivery
 - Increase coordination of content development between agriculture, health, and WASH sectors
 - Opportunity for a centralized database of messaging
 - Must educate private sector partners about how to include nutrition information in current messaging
 - Out-grower business networks; financial services

Examples (weather messages)

“Now would be a good time to plant [specific nutrient-dense crops], which provide excellent nutrition for young children.”

“As rains are expected over the coming weeks, don’t forget to discard any standing water around your farm and homestead, as mosquitoes that can carry malaria may breed there.”

- 2. Strong, accepted platforms and content exist for agricultural and nutrition information.**
 - Supplement agriculture content with nutrition messages
 - Conduct review of existing messages and content, identifying areas that could be made more nutrition sensitive



Conclusions

Promotion of improved planters and fertilizer applicators among women rice and groundnut farmers

Promote giving pregnant and lactating women time and space to take regular breaks during work to ensure optimal nutrition for themselves and children

Trainings provided on access to finance, household budgeting, and women's entrepreneurship

Promote joint decision making on the use of income for food, caring, and health-seeking behaviors

Pursuit of integrated pest management and safe management of pesticides and fertilizers use of protective gear to safeguard health

Promote product safety warnings, such as to advise women and children from being an area when there is spraying

3. A gender gap exists in access to information.

- Evidence shows that women's discretionary income has a greater impact on child nutrition and food security than men's (Smith et al. 2003; UNICEF 2011),
- In Ghana, only about 20 percent of public extension services reach women farmers (Ministry of Food and Agriculture 2007).
- Must understand and address barriers preventing women from accessing information
- Include men and others that influence how women spend their time and energy in messaging efforts

4. Value chain actors are well placed to promote content related to the use of agricultural income.

- Share how increases in incomes can be used to improve nutrition outcomes, such as purchasing nutrient-rich foods or saving for future healthcare needs
- Opportunities exist for creative content development using extension agents and ICT, marketing strategies, or development of business models to incentivize investment.
- Remember that increased income does not necessarily translate to better household nutrition. Educational efforts are essential!

- 5. ICT platforms are growing rapidly and can reinforce information provided through other mechanisms.**
 - Relatively little content within ICT services on nutrition-sensitive agriculture, compared to mainstream agriculture messages and health messages.
 - Interpersonal communication combined with mass media is the greatest opportunity to reinforce learning
 - More can be done in Ghana to gauge the willingness to pay for ICT content and to test its design and approaches for integrating nutrition-related content.



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QUESTIONS?

