

EXTENSION AGENTS' PERCEPTIONS
REGARDING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
IN THE RIYADH REGION OF SAUDI ARABIA

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**EXTENSION AGENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURE IN THE RIYADH REGION OF SAUDI ARABIA**

A Thesis in

Agricultural and Extension Education

by

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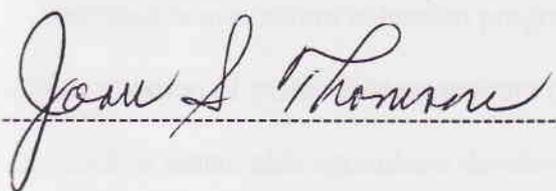
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We approve the thesis of Suaiban S. F. AL-Subaiee.



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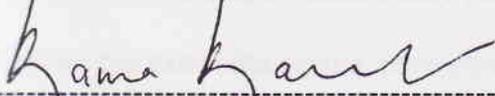
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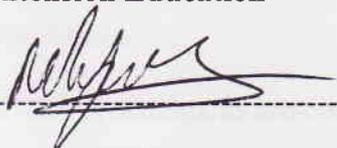
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Abstract

Sustainable agriculture extension programs are mandated worldwide to foster the implementation of sustainable agriculture practices. The current Saudi agriculture policy is related to sustainable agriculture development and mandates related agricultural extension programs. Therefore, understanding extension agents' perceptions and knowledge toward sustainable agriculture is especially important. To reach the goal of implementing extension programs in sustainable agriculture requires knowing the current knowledge and perceptions of Saudi extension agents toward sustainable agriculture.

The purpose of the research was to identify and describe agricultural extension agents' perceptions about sustainable agriculture concepts and their self-reported competence in sustainable agriculture. Additionally the study examined relationships and differences between the extension agents' perceptions toward sustainable agriculture and their self-reported level of current competence with their age, rural/urban background, and educational background. The study was carried out in the Riyadh Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The study participants are considered a census of the Riyadh Region agricultural extension agents. Data collection started April 2, 2002 and was completed May 15, 2002 with a 100% response rate. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze data. Descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, and correlations were used, when appropriate.

The extension agents generally had a favorable (positive) perception toward sustainable agriculture concepts and perceived themselves as slightly to moderately competent in sustainable agriculture. The findings show no significant differences or

relationships between overall means of agents' perceptions toward sustainable agriculture concepts and their age, their place of birth (rural/urban), their current residence (rural/urban), their highest educational level, and their area of specialization for the highest level of education. Also, the findings show no significant differences or relationships in overall means of agents' self-reported competency level in sustainable agriculture and their age, their place of birth (rural/urban), their current residence (rural/urban), their highest educational level, and their area of specialization for the highest level of education.

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the researcher believes the time is optimum to train Saudi extension agents in sustainable agriculture in order to empower them to facilitate the implementation of the current Saudi sustainable agriculture policy. Specific recommendations include developing in-service training programs for agents and establishing sustainable agriculture programming using the interactive program development process.