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Effects of Farmers' Perceptions of the National Farmers' Day Awards Scheme on Farm Productivity in Ghana

Fadilah Mohammed, Lambon Sanibil Joseph and Thomas Ayaaba
Department of Agricultural Innovation Communication, Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Sciences, University for Development Studies, Ghana
Corresponding Author Email: mfadilah@uds.edu.gh

Abstract

This study examined the effects of farmers' perceptions of the national Farmers' Day awards scheme on farm productivity in the Tolon District of the Northern Region of Ghana. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A total of 270 farmers were used for the study using a multi-stage sampling technique. The study revealed that there is a significant difference in farmers' general perceptions, selection criteria and the effect of the national Farmers' Day awards programme on farm productivity based on farmers' demographic characteristics. The findings have also demonstrated the effects of the perceptions of the farmers on the national Farmers' Day awards programme on farm productivity in the Northern Region of Ghana. It is recommended that the award scheme should be fair in selecting farmers for the awards, irrespective of their farm sizes. Government should ensure that agricultural extension agents are made available to facilitate and observe the majority of the farmers whose farms are not reached for selection. The award scheme should review the selection criteria to include all the socio-cultural narratives (i.e., gender issues, land ownership, etc.) of the farmers in order to make the awards programme inclusive.

Keywords: Farmers' Perceptions, Selection Criteria, Productivity, Farmers' Day Awards, Ghana

1. Introduction

Agriculture plays a vital role in the economic development of many countries, including Ghana. As one of the leading sectors in Ghana's economy, agriculture employs a significant portion of the population and contributes to food security, poverty reduction, and foreign exchange earnings (Ferreira et. al, 2022). Recognizing the importance of farmers' contributions to the economic development of nations across the world, most governments have established the National Farmers' Day Awards Scheme, a prestigious program aimed at honouring and rewarding outstanding farmers for their exceptional performance and contributions to the agricultural sector (Munya, 2019). National Farmers' Award seeks to return the dignity of the soil and appreciate the immense contribution that goes into placing food on the table of millions of families worldwide (Munya, 2019). Awarding farmers also helps consumers to appreciate what goes on in the production of food, from the first seed planted to the bunch they buy in the markets (Urowoli & Nkansah, 2020).

Globally, several countries appoint dates for and celebrate honouring farmers. For instance, in Australia, as reported by the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DEWA), every 17th day of June is for awarding farmers (Australia DEWA, 2020). Australian Farmer of the Year Awards is designed to celebrate and applaud the outstanding achievements of those individuals and families making significant contributions to Australian Agriculture (Australia DEWA, 2020). In the United States of America (USA), National Farmers' Day is observed on the 12th of October every year. It is celebrated to pay tribute to all farmers throughout American history (USDA, 2017). In India, National Farmers Day also known as, *Kisan Divas* in Hindi, is celebrated on the 23rd day of December every year. It involves the organization of various programmes, such as debates, seminars, quiz competitions, discussions, workshops, exhibitions, essay writing competitions and other functions (Banarsi & Pawan, 2018). National Farmers Day and Awards are observed on the 11th day of November every year in South Korea (Imatome-Yun, 2012). In

Pakistan, National Farmers' Day also known as, *Kissan Day* was celebrated for the first time in the country's history on December 18, 2019 in Islamabad with the aim of promoting the welfare and prosperity of farmers (Turbat, 2020).

In Africa, several countries are involved in the observance and rewarding farmers. In Zambia, National Farmers Day is observed on the first Monday of August every year (Zambia Farmers Day, n.d). Farmers' awards day is also observed in South Africa and Kenya, however, dates for the awards vary; mostly held in between June and November each year (Farmers Weekly, 2017; Munya, 2019).

In Ghana, the National Farmer's Day award programme was established in 1986 by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA, 2020b). Every first Friday of December has been set aside to honour farmers and fisher folks for their efforts in feeding the nation and recognizing the vital contributions of a strong agricultural sector to the prosperity of the Ghanaian economy (Urowoli & Nkansah, 2020). The scheme aims to motivate and inspire farmers by acknowledging their hard work, innovations, and successes. Through this initiative, the Ghanaian government seeks to incentivize agricultural excellence, foster healthy competition, and promote sustainable farming practices. A programme of activities takes place to mark the day including prizes awarded to deserving farmers and fishermen in the area of best practices and outputs. However, it is important to note that, how farmers perceive the scheme, its fairness, transparency, and effectiveness, can significantly impact their motivation, commitment, and overall productivity on the farm. Understanding the effects of farmers' perceptions on the scheme's outcomes is essential for policymakers, agricultural stakeholders, and researchers striving to enhance farm productivity and drive sustainable agricultural development in Ghana.

In selecting the best farmer for an award, famers' activities are closely monitored and assessed by agricultural extension agents over the farming season and preliminary selections made at the district and regional levels base on criteria. The criteria used include; diversified and integrated farming operations, scale of operation, knowledge of husbandry practices, environmental awareness and relevant practices, identification of farming problems and innovations, record keeping, adoption of new technology, farmer's role in his or her community, and general impression of farmer and farm (MOFA, 2020b).

As Ghana continually celebrates farmers across the country and awards their efforts, the Peasant Farmers' Association of Ghana (PFAG) is consistently calling for a review of the selection criteria of awarding the farmers (PFAG, 2020). The Association is of the view that the selection process is skewed towards the few large-scale farmers neglecting smallholder farmers, fishermen, the youth and women who constitute the majority in the country.

Historically, medium and smallholder farmers and fisher folks constitute about 83 percent of the 11.3 million farmers in Ghana, but this category of farmers has never won the overall national best farmer award (PFAG, 2020). It has been noted that the large scale farmers with minimum farm size of not less than 100 acres who constitute about 17 percent of farmers are the recipients of all the overall national best awards (PFAG, 2020). The neglect of smallholder farmers and women in the agenda of the national farmers' day celebrations and the best farmers' selection process undermined their role as stakeholders contributing to the agricultural development in the country (PFAG, 2020). Women in Ghana, whose primary source of income is agriculture, are frequently not considered in the planning of the national farmers' day celebrations. This is not unusual because this group of women are frequently challenged in decision making like their colleagues in other parts of the developing world, where women are frequently less empowered to act as a result of a variety of structural restrictions (Andani and Jatoe, 2020).

Low productivity, postharvest losses, processing and marketing are cardinal issues still plaguing the agricultural sector in Ghana (MOFA, 2008). Low levels of literacy associated with low technology adoption among smallholder farmers is a major concern which keeps the output gap of smallholder farmers at high levels (Akumbole, et al. 2019; Laube et al., 2012). The Peasant Farmers' Association of Ghana argued that smallholder farmers seek an award system that allows all categories of farmers to showcase their yields per acre, application of appropriate technology, value addition, adoption of agribusiness either in small, medium or large size, strategies to reduce postharvest losses, environmental friendliness in farming and novelty are those that are in tune with time and will consolidate the credentials of not only the scheme, but the sector as a whole (PFAG, 2020).

The use of scale of production as a key metric in selecting the overall best farmer, accounting for very important socio-cultural dynamics such as factors undergirding access to land for women, environmental awareness, innovation, contribution to poverty reduction and crucially reducing the inequality gap (Urowoli & Nkansah, 2020). It is important that the metrics for selecting the overall best farmer reflect all these dimensions of productivity and socio-cultural narratives while making room for exploring issues such as good agronomic practices and environmental awareness which are cardinal to sustainable food production (PFAG, 2020).

In Ghana, farmers receive awards that mostly have no direct link to the farmers' demands. Such awards are seen as luxury incentives rather than a profitable input for farm productivity. Similar observation was made in Kenya, where deserving farmers in the national farmers day are given trophies, certificates and handshakes with the President

(Munya, 2019).It will be good to scrap the policy which allows for personal freebies such as houses and pickup vehicles worth thousands of Ghana cedis to be given, which do not in any way help in improving upon the agricultural sector as a whole. Again, building a house for a farmer in the urban area as part of the award system suggests resettling such farmers to those areas, which can be counter-intuitive to the rationale for the award scheme. Smallholder farmers argued that the farmers' day award should focus on giving out agricultural related sophisticated tools, equipment, and materials, which other farmers can benefit from and also in the end, further advance the agricultural sector as a whole.

The adoption of scale of production as a key metric in selecting the overall best farmer leads to the neglect of women, the youth in agriculture and young farmers. It is important that the metrics for selecting the overall best farmer reflect diverse dimensions of productivity and socio-cultural narratives while making room for exploring issues such as good agronomic practices and environmental awareness (PFAG, 2020). However, this has not been the case in Ghana, and for that matter, at the district levels. It is therefore necessary to reconsider the selection process of national farmers awards programme to ensure that the majority of small-scale farmers are also seen someday winning the national best farmer award.

Currently, there is scanty literature on National Farmers' Day awards and its effects on productivity of farmers. The most found information is those of news articles on web pages that do not delve into the problem. Also, no research work has been found on the perception of farmers in the Tolon District on the National Farmers' Day award programme. As such, this study aims to explore the effects of farmers' perceptions of the National Farmers' Day Awards Scheme on farm productivity in Ghana by examining the perceptions of farmers towards the scheme, their level of participation, and the resulting impact on their productivity. This research endeavours to provide valuable insights into the link between farmer motivation and productivity. Additionally, this investigation seeks to identify potential areas for improvement within the scheme to better align it with farmers' expectations and enhance its overall effectiveness in driving agricultural growth.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess the perception of farmers on the farmers' day awards and how the awards impact productivity. The specific objectives are to:

- Assess farmers' perception about the national farmers' day awards scheme;
- Determine the extent to which farmers agree to the award criteria for the overall national best farmer;
- Assess the effects of farmer's day awards on agricultural productivity;
- Assess how farmers' socio-demographic characteristics influence the extent of agreement on the award criteria for overall best farmer.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in the Tolon District of the Northern Region of Ghana. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study involved all farmers in the 159 communities of the Tolon District. However, data was collected on farmers who are into crop and animal farming, including award winning farmers and non-award-winning farmers. The district is divided into six operational zones by Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA). Based on this, the study employed the multistage sampling technique in which the stratified random sampling technique was adopted in the first stage and made use of the six operational zones to form a new non-homogeneous single study group. In the second stage, simple random sampling technique using the lottery method was used to select three communities from each of the six operational zones. Simple random sampling technique was again used with snow balling to select 15 farmers from the 18 selected communities in the district, making a total of 270 farmers who served as respondents for the study. This is because it would have been technically difficult and extremely expensive to have surveyed the whole population, especially when the population is non-registered (Anderson et al. 2016).

Because the total population of farmers who have received the best farmer award is not known, the Wald (1951), sampling size determination formula for the infinite population was used as follows:

$n = (Z^2. p.q.N) / (d^2 + Z^2 .p.q)$ where: n = sample size, Z = the z-value associated with the desired level of confidence (1.65 for a 90% confidence level), p = the estimated proportion of the population with a particular characteristic

q = 1 - p d = the margin of error, N = the population size

To estimate the proportion of farmers in Tolon district with a margin of error of 0.07 (which is smaller than 0.05) and a 90% confidence level, the researcher assumed that the estimated proportion is 0.5 and the population is infinite, thus: n = 148

However, according to Creswell (2013), a calculated sampling size can be increased to incorporate unforeseen occurrences during data collection but cannot be decreased if all things remain the same. Hence, the sampling size was increased to 270 farmers. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was

the main source of data that was gathered from the respondents using questionnaire. The secondary data was gathered from journal articles and other reports from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Secondary data sourced from the District MOFA office guided the researchers on identifying some key respondents (farmers who have received farmers' day award before) for the study. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 General Perceptions of Farmers on National Farmers' Day Awards

The national farmers' day awards programme was introduced by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to appreciate and award deserving farmers for their immerse contributions towards the development of the country. Since its inception, farmers have some perceptions about the programme. In this study, respondents (farmers) were assessed in terms of their perceptions of the national farmers' day awards programme. Table 1 gives an overview of the perceptions farmers hold about the programme. The results indicate that the farmers were generally undecided in their perceptions on the national farmers' day awards programme (overall $\bar{x}$ = 2.97). The farmers could not clearly state as to whether the programme is good or otherwise. They were, however, quick to state that the programme in itself is a good one but due to the many anomalies associated with it, makes it difficult to clearly state whether it is a good or not. However, the results specifically indicated that most of the farmers agree that the programme aims at appreciating farmers ($\bar{x}$ = 4.41). This finding corroborates that of Urowoli & Nkansah (2020) which found that most farmers believe that the national farmers day awards programme was instituted to honour farmers and fishermen for their effort in feeding the nation and recognize the vital contributions of a strong agricultural sector to the prosperity of the Ghanaian economy. The results also indicate that farmers believe that the programme motivates and inspires farmers ($\bar{x}$= 4.34); explaining the fact that most farmers believe that upon receiving the award, they are motivated and inspired by the award to work harder in subsequent productions. Most of the farmers (respondents) ($\bar{x}$ = 3.72) agreed that the programme includes all category of farmers (livestock, fisheries and crops). Majority of the farmers ($\bar{x}$=3.94) also have the perception that only few large-scale farmers are awarded during the programme. This supports the assertion that historically, medium and smallholder farmers and fisher folks constitute about 83 percent of the 11.3 million farmers in Ghana, but this category of farmers has never won the overall national best farmer award (PFAG, 2020). It has been noted that the large scale farmers with minimum farm size of not less than 100 acres who constitute about 17 percent of farmers are the recipients of all the overall national best farmers' awards (PFAG, 2020).

Most of the respondents ($\bar{x}$=2.25) however, disagreed that the programme is only for crop farmers as can be seen in table 1. This is because the programme is organized to appreciate the efforts of all farmers. This finding supports that of Urowoli and Nkansah (2020) who indicated in their study that, the programme is organized to appreciate the efforts of all farmers (livestock, fisheries and crops) in the country. Similarly, the respondents (farmers) disagreed that the programme is of no relevance to the nation ($\bar{x}$= 1.58); that rural and community farmers are not included in the programme ($\bar{x}$= 1.88) and that the programme is only for educated farmers ($\bar{x}$= 200). Respondents explained that any farmer from any community, in any rural area with or without any formal education is given the opportunity to participate in the programme if he or she shows the interest to participate in the programme.

Table 1. Farmers' Perceptions about the National Farmers' Day Awards Programme

Statements	Mean	SD	DE
The programme aims at appreciating farmers	4.41	0.71	A
The programme motivates and inspires farmers	4.34	0.77	A
The programme is only for crop farmers	2.25	1.25	D
All farmers (livestock, fisheries and crops) are involved in the programme	3.72	1.12	A
Only few large-scale farmers are awarded in the programme	3.94	1.16	A
Women farmers are neglected in the programme	2.96	1.40	U
Young and youthful farmers are not involved in the programme	2.67	1.26	U
The programme is only for educated farmers	2.00	1.00	D
Rural and community farmers are not included in the awards	1.88	1.10	D
The programme is of no relevance to farmers and the nation	1.58	0.92	D
Average	2.97	0.96	U

Strongly agree (SA: 4.5-5), Agree (A: 3.5-4.4), Undecided (U: 2.5-3.4), Disagree (D: 1.5-2.4), Strongly Disagree (SD: 0-1.4)

3.2 Selection Criteria of the National Farmers' Day Awards

In this study, farmers were assessed on their level of agreement to the selection criteria of the national farmers' day awards programme. MOFA, (2020b) and Urowoli & Nkansah (2020) highlighted the criteria for selecting the award winners for the national farmers' day awards programme. The criteria were adopted by MOFA as the main tool for selecting the award winners for the farmers' day awards programme. The criteria allow a farmer's activity to be closely monitored and assessed by an extension agent during the farming season where selections are made.

Table 2. provides an overview of farmers' level of agreement on the selection criteria. It is obvious from the results that farmers generally agree (overall $\bar{x}$ = 3.55) to the selection criteria used by MOFA to select the award-winning farmers for the awards programme. However, the respondents (farmers) had different views on some of the criteria used. The respondents (farmer) disagreed to the use of scale of production as a criterion for selecting the award-winning farmers ($\bar{x}$= 2.43). This might be due to the fact that using scale of production to select the best farmer would only discourage the majority of small scale farmers who are about 83% of farmers in the country (PFAG, 2020).

The respondents (farmers) were undecided about the diversified and integrated farming operations ($\bar{x}$ = 3.13) and farmers' role in their community ($\bar{x}$ = 2.93) as part of the selection criteria. From the results, the respondents (farmers) were also undecided when it comes to records keeping ($\bar{x}$ = 3.49), and this could be due to the fact that most of the respondents are not educated and therefore cannot have proper documentations of their farming operations.

Table 2. Selection Criteria for the National Farmers' Day Awards Programme

Statements	Mean	SD	DE
Diversified and integrated farming operations	3.13	1.30	U
Scale of operation	2.43	1.50	D
Knowledge of husbandry practice	4.09	0.99	A
Environmental awareness and relevance practices	4.04	0.93	A
Identification of farming problems and innovation	4.04	0.92	A
Records keeping	3.49	1.01	U
Adoption of new technology	4.04	0.82	A
Farmer's role in his or her community	2.93	1.30	U
General impression of farmer and farm	3.73	0.96	A
Average	3.55	1.08	A

Strongly agree (SA: 4.5-5), Agree (A: 3.5-4.4), Undecided (U: 2.5-3.4), Disagree (D: 1.5-2.4), Strongly Disagree (SD: 0-1.4)

3.3 Farmers' Day Awards and Farm Productivity

Awarding farmers helps consumers to appreciate what goes on in the production of food, from the first seed planted to the bunch they buy in the markets (Urowoli & Nkansah, 2020). The awards also seek to appreciate their effort as farmers in feeding the country, providing raw materials for industries and providing various job opportunities for citizens living in the country.

Farmers' knowledge was assessed on whether the awards given have effect on farm productivity or otherwise. The results in Table 3 indicate that the farmers were generally undecided on whether the award has effect on farm productivity or not (overall $\bar{x}$ = 3.00). This could be due to the fact that most of the farmers have the opinion that the awards are mostly given based on favouritism and political party lines which do not encourage them upon receiving awards to work harder to improve farm productivity. Another reason might also be that farmers do not mostly relate well with the award category.

The results, however, indicate that the respondents disagreed that women are encouraged to go into large-scale farming through the award programme $\bar{x}$ = 2.22). This might be due to the reason that women are mostly discriminated in terms of land ownership for agricultural purposes hence, they rarely get involved in the awards programme. Most of the respondent agreed that the awards motivate farmers to increase farm productivity($\bar{x}$ = 4.19).

As indicated in Table 3, the respondents were undecided on the issue that the selection criteria inspire farmers to increase farm productivity ($\bar{x}$= 3.11).This might be due to the fact that the respondents believe that the selection criteria are highly based on the scale of production which discourages the small and medium scale farmers who constitute about 83% of the farmers in the country (PFAG, 2020).

Similarly, the respondents (farmers) were again undecided on how the award relates well with production activities ($\bar{x}$=2.67). This is due to the fact that the awards given to farmers mostly do not have direct link with production activity. This finding concurs with similar observation that was made in Kenya, where deserving farmers

in the national farmers' day were given trophies, certificates and handshake with the President (Munya, 2019). The respondents were also undecided as to whether the awards motivate the youth to go into large scale farming ($\bar{x}$ = 2.22).

Table 3. Farmers' Day Awards Programme and Farm Productivity

Statements	Mean	SD	DE
The awards motivate farmers to increase farm productivity	4.19	1.01	A
The selection criteria inspire farmers to expand farm sizes	3.11	1.33	U
The awards given to farmers relate well with production activities	2.67	1.25	U
The awards motivate the youth to go into farm production	2.61	1.26	U
Women are encouraged to go into large-scale farming through the award programme	2.22	1.99	D
The awards encourage farmers to adopt new technology that will enhance productivity	3.24	1.37	U
Average	3.00	1.37	U

Strongly agree (SA: 4.5-5), Agree (A: 3.5-4.4), Undecided (U: 2.5-3.4), Disagree (D: 1.5-2.4), Strongly Disagree (SD: 0-1.4)

3.4 Differences in Farmers' General Perception, Selection Criteria and the Contribution of the Farmers' Day Awards Programme on Farm Productivity by Demographic Characteristics

3.4.1. Perceptions, Selection Criteria and Effect of the Farmers' Day Awards on Farm Productivity Based on Farmers' Gender.

A paired sampled t – test was conducted to compare the farmers' general perception, selection criteria, and the effect of the award on farm productivity of the male and female respondents. The results indicate that there is significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the male and female farmers in the selection criteria used in selecting the awardees $t(180, 1) = 2.60$, $p = <0.01$ as can be seen in Table 4; this means that male and female farmers have different levels of agreement to the selection criteria. However, there is no statistical difference ($p < 0.05$) in the general perceptions and the effect of the awards on farm productivity. This means that male and female farmers have the same level of agreement in the general perception of the farmers' day awards programme. Similarly, male and female farmers also have the same level of agreement about the effect of the awards on farm productivity. Generally, male farmers agree to the selection criteria than their female counterparts. These results point to the fact that female farmers within the study area and the country at large, are mostly left out in the national farmers' day awards programme. This finding is in consonance with that of Penunia (2011), who reported that the role of women in agriculture is continuously unrecognized in policy and in the distribution of resources; and that the benefits of planned activities are not meaningfully sensed by women farmers.

3.4.2 Differences in Farmers' General Perception, Selection Criteria and the Effect on Farm Productivity of the Farmers' Day Awards Programme according to Age

ANOVA was run to compare the general perception, the selection criteria and the effect of farmers' awards on farm productivity according to the age of the respondents. As shown in Table 4, the results indicate that there is significant difference ($p>0.05$) in the effect of the awards on farm productivity $f(180, 1) = 3.14$. This means that farmers in different age groups have different levels of agreement on the effect of the awards on farm productivity. However, there is no statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$) in the general perceptions and the selection criteria of the farmers' day awards programme. This implies that farmers with different age groups have the same general perceptions about the farmers' day awards programme. Similarly, farmers of different age groups have the same level of agreement to the selection criteria of the farmers' day awards programme. Generally, farmers below 25 years agree that the award has effect on farm productivity than the other age groups. This might be due to the fact that farmers below age 25 have limited knowledge and practical experience about farming and the national farmers' day awards programme which could influence their thinking to believe that upon receiving the awards farm productivity is likely to increase.

3.4.3 Differences in Farmers' General Perception, Selection Criteria and the Effect of the Awards on Farm Productivity according to the Farmers' Educational Background

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to compare the general perception, the selection criteria and the effect of the awards on farm productivity. The results in Table 4 indicate that there is significant difference ($p>0.05$) in the effect of the awards on farm productivity $f(180, 1)=3.14$. This means that farmers with different educational background have different levels of agreement on the effect of the awards on farm productivity. There is, however, no statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$) in the general perceptions and the selection criteria of the farmers day

award programme according to respondent's educational background. This means that farmers with different educational background have the same general perceptions about the farmers day awards programme. Similarly, farmers with different educational background have the same level of agreement to the selection criteria of the farmers day awards program. Generally, farmers with Junior High School (JHS) educational background agree that the award has effect on farm productivity more than the other farmers with different educational background.

3.4.4 Differences in Farmers' General Perception, Selection Criteria and the Effect of the Awards on Farm Productivity according to the Farmers' Employment Status

ANOVA was run to compare the general perception, the selection criteria and the effect of the awards on farm productivity. As shown in Table 4, the results indicate that there is statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$) in the general perception of farmers on the farmers day awards programme; $f(180, 1) = 10.57$. This means that farmers with different employment status have different level of agreement on the general perception of the farmers day awards programme. However, there is no significant difference ($p>0.05$) in farmer's perceptions on the selection criteria and the effect of the farmers day awards on farm productivity. This implies that farmers with different employment status have the same level of agreement to the selection criteria. Similarly, farmers with different employment status have the same level of agreement to the effect of the farmers' day awards programme on farm productivity. Generally, farmers who are self-employed agree to the general perception of the farmers day awards programme than the other farmers who are employed in the formal sector. From the interview, it was obvious that respondents who are self-employed were engaged in farming as their main occupation. Since this category of farmers are directly into farming, they may know and understand the processes and activities involved in the national farmers' day awards programme, hence leading to their high perception concerning the programme than the others.

3.4.5 Differences in Farmers' General Perception, Selection Criteria and the Effect of the Awards on Farm Productivity according to Household Size of Farmers

In order to compare the general perception, the selection criteria and the effect of the awards on farm productivity of the farmers according their household size, ANOVA was run for this purpose. As shown in Table 4 there is no significant difference ($p>0.05$) in the general perception, selection criteria and the effect of awards on farm productivity based on the household size of farmers. This means that farmers with different household sizes have the same perceptions about the farmers' day awards program. Similarly, farmers with different household sizes have the same level of agreement to the selection criteria of the programme. Also, farmers with different household sizes have the same level of agreement to the effect of the awards on farm productivity.

3.4.6 Differences in Farmers' General Perception, Selection Criteria and the Effect of the Awards on Farm Productivity according to main Occupations of the Farmers

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to compare the general perception, the selection criteria and the effect of the awards on farm productivity according to main occupation of the farmers. As shown in Table 4, the results indicate that there is statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$) in the general perception of the awards programme $f(180, 1) = 3.84$. This means that farmers with different main occupation holds different general perceptions of the farmers' day awards programme. The results also indicate that there is statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$) in the selection criteria, $f(180, 1) = 2.92$ of the farmers' day awards program based on respondents' main occupation. However, there is no statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$) in the effect of the awards on farm productivity. This means that farmers with different main occupation have the same level of agreement on the effect of the awards on farm productivity.

Generally, farmers with trading as their main occupation have high general perception of the farmers day awards programme than others with different main occupation. From the study, farmers with trading as their main occupation were mostly involved in agricultural related commodities and inputs. Their knowledge in farming coupled with their marketing experience could give them better understanding about the awards program leading to their higher perception about the awards programme than the other farmers with different main occupations.

Similarly, farmers with teaching as their main occupation agree to the selection criteria of the farmers day awards programme more than the others with different main occupation. It is quite obvious from this finding that farmers with teaching as their main occupation may have more knowledge in the theoretical aspect of the criteria and may not understand how the selection criteria works practically thereby making them agree to the criteria more than the other farmers with different main occupation.

Table 4. Differences in Farmers' General Perception, Selection Criteria and the Contribution of the Farmers Day Awards Programme on Farm Productivity by Demographic Characteristics

Demographic indicators	General perceptions		Selection criteria		Effect on productivity		N
	$\bar{X}$ (SD)	Test	$\bar{X}$ (SD)	Test	$\bar{X}$ (SD)	Test	
Gender							
Male	2.96 (0.43)	1.23	3.59 (0.52)	2.60*	3.03 (0.93)	0.78	148
Female	3.06 (0.52)		3.31 (0.68)		2.98 (0.80)		32
Age							
Below 25	2.98 (0.50)	0.02	3.73 (0.83)	0.74	3.63 (1.10)	3.14*	14
26-35	2.89 (0.48)		3.60 (0.55)		3.19 (1.00)		50
36-45	2.97 (0.38)		3.51 (0.50)		2.86 (0.86)		59
46-55	3.08 (0.49)		3.47 (0.60)		2.80 (0.83)		37
56 and above	3.00 (0.41)		3.53 (0.49)		2.89 (0.74)		20
Education							
Primary	3.03 (0.46)	1.78	3.40 (0.58)	2.49	2.87 (0.87)	4.30*	40
JHS	2.78 (0.34)		3.83 (0.53)		3.60 (0.93)		23
SHS	2.89 (0.41)		3.46 (0.64)		3.23 (0.88)		13
Tertiary	2.93 (0.50)		3.64 (0.71)		3.21 (0.84)		23
None	3.03 (0.45)		3.52 (0.48)		2.81 (0.91)		81
Employment status							
Self employed	2.90 (0.44)	10.57*	3.54 (0.56)	0.81	2.99 (0.92)	0.18	172
Formal sector	2.49 (0.32)		3.72 (0.60)		3.44 (0.96)		8
Household size							
1-2	2.81 (0.44)	1.34	3.69 (0.55)	0.86	3.55 (0.86)	2.51	14
4-6	3.05 (0.45)		3.55 (0.77)		3.15 (1.04)		26
7-9	2.93 (0.43)		3.60 (0.54)		3.00 (0.92)		64
10 and above	3.03 (0.46)		3.48 (0.50)		2.86 (0.87)		76
Occupation							
Crop	2.95 (0.45)	3.84*	3.56 (0.55)	2.92*	3.06 (0.96)	2.83	137
Livestock	2.96 (0.37)		3.46 (0.37)		2.64 (0.61)		23
Teaching	2.53 (0.25)		4.30 (0.55)		4.22 (0.59)		3
Trading	3.33 (0.39)		3.30 (0.74)		2.79 (0.68)		15
Artisan	2.60 (0.14)		4.17 (0.55)		3.58 (1.77)		2

Notes*:* Figures in parenthesis are standard deviation. '*' denotes significance at the 5% level. *Test* is *t-test* for comparison between two groups and *F-test* for comparison among more than two groups.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study examined the perception farmers have on the National Farmers' Day awards programme and how it affects farm productivity. The findings have revealed the perceptions farmers in the Tolon District have on the National Farmers' Day awards programme. The study revealed that there is significant difference in farmers' general perceptions, selection criteria and the effect of the national farmers day awards programme on farm productivity based on farmers' demographic characteristics. They have also demonstrated the effects of the perceptions of the farmers on the national farmers day awards programme on farm productivity in the Northern Region of Ghana.

It is obvious that the national farmers day award is a good programme which requires various strategies for its effective implementation in order to achieve the desirable outcomes. Some respondents agreed that only few large-scale farmers are awarded during the programme. It is therefore recommended that the award scheme should be fair in selecting farmers for the awards irrespective of their farm sizes. Government should ensure that agricultural extension agents are made available to facilitate and observe the majority of farmers whose farms are not inspected for selection. The award scheme should review the selection criteria to include all the socio-cultural narratives (i.e., gender issues, land ownership etc.) of the farmers in order to make the awards programme inclusive. The award scheme should also ensure that farmers are selected based on practical farming knowledge, relevant practices and output per given area and not necessarily based on the scale of production. The awards scheme should ensure that the

award items given to farmers be items that can be used to improve upon their farming activities so as to improve upon their productivity. This would go a long way to motivate other farmers to work hard to win the award sometime in the future to enable them improve upon their productivity.

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