



MATCOM
training for the management of cooperatives

TRAINER'S MANUAL

COLLECTING AND RECEIVING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE

material for management training in agricultural co-operatives

by Malcolm Harper



MATCOM

material and techniques for cooperative management training

The MATCOM Project was launched in 1978 by the International Labour Office, with the financial support of Sweden. In its third phase (1984-1986) MATCOM is financed by Denmark, Finland and Norway.

In collaboration with cooperative organisations and training institutes in all regions of the world, MATCOM designs and produces material for the training of managers of cooperatives and assists in the preparation of adapted versions for use in various countries. MATCOM also provides support for improving the methodology of cooperative training and for the training of trainers.

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ISBN 92-2-103164-0

First published 1982

Third impression 1985 Printed in Vienna, Austria

Preface

This training package is one of a number of training packages designed by the ILO-MATCOM Project to assist people who plan or carry out training for the managerial staff of agricultural co-operatives in developing countries.

The training provided under this training package, as well as under the other packages in this series, is based on a thorough analysis of:

- (i) the tasks and functions to be performed in agricultural co-operative societies in developing countries;
- (ii) the common problems and constraints facing the effective performance of these tasks and functions.

The result of this analysis is reflected in the MATCOM "Curriculum Guide for Agricultural Co-operative Management Training". The Guide contains syllabuses for 24 management subjects and MATCOM has produced training packages, similar to this manual, for the following subjects:

- Collecting and Receiving Agricultural Produce
- Transport Management
- Storage Management
- Marketing of Agricultural Produce
- Supply Management
- Rural Savings and Credit Schemes
- Staff Management
- Financial Management
- Cost Accounting and Control
- Risk Management
- Project Preparation and Appraisal
- Work Planning
- Export Marketing
- Management of Larger Agricultural Co-operatives

For more information on the above training material, please write to:

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THE TRAINING PROGRAMME1. Target Group

Target groups for this training programme on "Collecting and Receiving Agricultural Produce" are managers and assistant managers of agricultural co-operative societies with marketing functions.

Co-operative officers or extension staff supporting the above target groups could also benefit from the programme.

2. Aim

The aim of the programme is to train participants to organise and manage the collecting and receiving of agricultural produce. In particular, the programme will enable trainees:

- to describe a collecting and receiving system as a whole and to identify the critical stages and operations within it;
- to identify the alternative ways of organising each stage of a collecting and receiving system;
- to calculate the total cost of alternative collection systems;
- to determine the most economical number and location of collection points for a given crop;
- to design, to staff and physically to lay out an effective crop reception system;
- to measure the trade offs involved in crop collection problems and to design optimum solutions;
- to schedule the collection of crops in the most efficient ways;
- to convey information to members about collection arrangements;
- to design and operate effective systems for the delivery, recovery and payment of temporary packing materials;
- to minimise members' waiting time at reception centres;

- to explain the necessity for crop grading and to select appropriate methods for grading their members' produce;
- to anticipate attempts to defraud members or the society, and to close the loopholes that make such attempts possible;
- to design and operate simple, rapid and secure systems for calculating amounts due and making appropriate entries or payments for members' credit;
- to design, install and manage effective systems for recording the results of receiving and grading operations;
- to apply what they have learned to a range of collecting and receiving problems, and to identify and forestall particular disputes and disagreements between management, the society and its members;
- to apply what they have learned to the particular situations in their own societies.

3. Use

The programme as described in this manual can be used for a special course on collecting and receiving produce. The complete programme, or parts of it, can also be incorporated in the curriculum for a more comprehensive management training programme.

4. Duration

The complete programme, as described in this manual, consists of 19 learning sessions. Session times vary from 1 to 3 hours. The total programme will take approximately 40 - 45 hours, or between 7 and 8 days, depending on the qualifications and experience of the trainees. A timetable should be prepared accordingly.

5. Training Approach and Methods

The programme is based on the assumptions that training is expensive and that money for co-operative management training is scarce. Therefore, it looks upon training as an investment, and unless the training yields results, the return on the money invested in it will be nil.

On their return home from the training programme, the trainees should therefore be able to show concrete results of improved management. In order to prepare and equip the trainee to achieve this, the programme has adopted a highly active learning approach through the use of "participative" learning methods and a built-in action commitment.

Trainees will not learn about their duties in a general and passive way. Their day-to-day management problems have, as much as possible, been translated into realistic case studies, role plays and other problem solving exercises. Trainees (working mostly in groups) will learn by solving these problems as in real life with the necessary assistance and guidance from the trainer, who will act more as a "facilitator" of learning than as a lecturer.

The built-in action commitment at the end of the programme will give each trainee the opportunity of using the knowledge and expertise of his colleagues in the training programme to find a concrete and acceptable solution to a specific problem he is faced with - a solution to which the trainee will commit himself for implementation.

6. Structure

The programme is divided into 19 topics (see the table of contents on page XI).

Each topic above is covered by a session in this package. The following material is provided for each session:

- a session guide for the trainer (yellow pages), giving the objective of the session, an estimate of the time needed and a comprehensive "plan" for the session, including instructions on how to conduct the session;
- handouts (white pages) of all case studies, role play briefs, etc., to be reproduced for distribution to the trainees.

7. Adapting the Material

Before "using" the programme in a real training situation, it may be necessary to adapt it.

Read through the programme and decide whether:

- the programme can be run as it is;
- only certain topics or sessions should be used;
- new topics and sessions should be added.

Your decision will depend on the training needs of your trainees and the means you have at your disposal.

Carefully read through the sessions you have decided to use. Check the subject matter in both session guides and the handouts. Modify them where possible to include local currencies, names, crops and so on. Such adaptation will help trainees to identify themselves more easily with the people and the situations described in the handouts, and will considerably increase the impact and effectiveness of the training programme.

Do not feel that this manual is like a book which contains the only answers. It is merely a collection of suggestions and ideas, which you must adapt, modify, use or reject as you think fit. The best evidence that you are using it properly will be the amount of changes, additions and amendments you have yourself written into this copy.

8. Preparing the Handouts and other Learning Aids

Handouts constitute an important part of the training material used in the programme. They can be reproduced from the original handouts supplied in the ringbinder, after the necessary adaptation has been made. Reproduction may be done using whatever method is available: stencil, offset printing, photocopy, or other.

The only item of training equipment which is absolutely essential is the chalkboard.

Some suggestions for visual aids are given in the session guides. If flipcharts or overhead projectors are available, you should prepare these aids in advance. If they are not available you can still use the chalkboard.

Trainees should be informed in advance to bring any documentation from their society pertaining to the collection and receiving of produce, such as:

- reception documents (forms used for delivery, grading, payment, etc.);
- examples of information to the members about collection arrangements;
- examples of transport schedules;
- quality standard schedules, which are used as a basis for grading the produce received from members;
- cost figures related to operations of collection centres and transports.

The Pre-course Questionnaire (see Session 1) should be sent to trainees in advance. Trainees should be asked to complete it and hand it in at the beginning of the training programme.

9. Preparing Yourself

Some trainers may feel that material of this sort means that they need only spend a few minutes preparing for each session. This is not the case.

You should go through the following steps before conducting any course which is based wholly or in part on this material:

- a. Read it carefully; be sure you understand the content, and that you can envisage what is intended to happen in the classroom.
- b. Work through all the calculations; be sure you understand them completely and try to predict the errors that trainees are likely to make, and the different answers which may not be wrong, but which will be worth following up.

- c. Work through the case studies yourself, and try to predict all the possible analyses and answers which trainees may come up with.
- d. Look up and write down on the material itself, as many local examples as you can to illustrate the points that are raised.
- e. Plan the whole session very carefully; try to predict approximately how many minutes each section of the session is likely to take, and make the appropriate modifications to fit into the time that you have available. Do not take the suggested time at the beginning of the session too seriously.

10. Conducting the Programme

While using the material, you should try to observe the following guidelines:

- a. Arrange the seating so that every trainee can see the faces of as many as possible of the others; do not put them in rows so that the only face they can see is your own.
- b. Be sure that the session is clearly structured in the trainees' minds; outline the structure at the beginning, follow it or say that you are diverging from it, and summarise what has happened at the end.
- c. Bear all the learning points in mind, and do not forget the job-oriented objectives of the session.
- d. Be flexible, do not follow the material slavishly and be prepared to change the approach, depending on what trainees, themselves, suggest.
- e. Avoid, whenever possible, telling the trainees anything; in a successful session all the points will have been elicited from them by skillful questioning.
- f. If you fail to elicit a particular answer from the trainees, it is your fault not theirs. Persist, by asking the same question in different ways, by hinting and so on, and only make the point yourself if all else has failed.
- g. Use silence as a weapon; if nobody answers a question, be prepared to wait for 20 or 30 seconds in order to embarrass somebody into making an attempt.