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THE INFLUENCE OF FARM ADVISORY OFFICERS
IN THE DIFFUSION OF AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS

A Thesis presented for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of Auckland

Department of Geography
June 1979

J.D.M. Fairgray

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of an extension agency, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Advisory Services Division, in stimulating the diffusion of innovations among farmers in New Zealand. Consideration of the Farm Advisory Officers' objectives and the rationale for their extension strategies provides a background for investigating and accounting for their use of different techniques. The effectiveness of these techniques is examined, within the framework of an adoption-stimulation model. The use of information sources, knowledge of a promoted innovation, attitudes to the need for the innovation, and adoption behaviour among farmers in the northern King Country are explored, to identify the relationships between these stages in the adoption process and Farm Advisory Officers' extension efforts. At a broader scale, a simple multiplier model is used to evaluate the effects of the distribution of extension efforts on the spread of information and innovations, especially among those farmers not directly influenced by advisers.

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