

**FARMERS' KNOWLEDGE LEVEL OF PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES
AND ASSOCIATED HEALTH PROBLEMS IN THE USE OF
AGRO-CHEMICALS ON COCOA PRODUCTION IN OSUN AND
EDO STATES, NIGERIA.**

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ABSTRACT

Comparative analysis of the precautionary measures and operational habits with the associated health problems among 240 farmers in cacao growing communities of Osun and Edo States, Nigeria was carried out. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The results showed high risk exposure of cocoa farmers to toxicity and hazards of agrochemicals used on their cocoa farms. The mean knowledge score of precautionary measures in both states was low. More than 50% of the cocoa farmers in the two states were in the habits of eating, drinking and smoking during spraying. About 65% of cocoa farmers in Osun had no extension contact and training on safe handling of chemicals compared to 97.0% of the farmers in Edo state. Majority (60%) of the farmers in the two states claimed that they have health problems with the following symptoms: body itching, cough and difficulty in breathing, which often occurred during and after chemicals usage. It is concluded that cocoa farmers in Osun and Edo States in Nigeria were vulnerable to health hazards associated with the use of chemicals due inadequate knowledge of the precautionary measures and exhibition of culpable operational habits that can be controlled through effective extension education programme.

KEYWORDS: Comparative analysis, operational habits, health problems, Agro-chemicals, cocoa farmers, chemical application and precautionary measures.