



REQUIREMENTS OF THE EXTENSION SERVICE TO ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT OF VEGETABLES IN BAGHDAD PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to identify the requirements for achieving the competitiveness of the local agricultural product of vegetables in the province of Baghdad, and for the purpose of achieving the goal, five areas have been identified to identify the requirements for achieving the competitiveness of the local product of vegetables in the province of Baghdad and included (training extension service providers, extension activities provided to vegetable growers, and technical requirements to achieve the quality of the local agricultural product of vegetables, government legislation and laws, and gain consumer satisfaction), and with reference to previous studies and the subject of research, a questionnaire was used to collect this data. A random sample of employees working in agricultural extension was taken in the Department of Agricultural Extension and Training and its center, and the Department of Agriculture of Baghdad, Karkh and Rusafa and its agricultural departments, numbering (114) employees. The results showed that there is agreement on the importance of the requirements that have been studied as requirements of great importance to the respondents for develop their capabilities, where the requirements of gaining consumer satisfaction came in first place according to the degree of importance to the respondents with a weighted average (3.782) degree. While the requirements of government legislation and laws came in last place according to the degree of importance for the respondents, as they were with a weighted average of (3.692) degrees. The researcher recommended the need to take into account these requirements by the relevant agricultural departments, especially the Department of Agricultural Extension and Training, by subjecting its employees working in agricultural extension to intensive training programs to enable them to carry out their duties in how to guide and educate vegetable farmers with specifications and standards to enhance the competitiveness of the local product and the preparation of extension activities provided to vegetable growers that enhance the quality of the agricultural product and the application of government legislation and laws and their application of the requirements of gaining consumer satisfaction.

Keywords: Agricultural consulting services, marketing extension, consumer satisfaction

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متطلبات الخدمة الإرشادية لتعزيز القدرة التنافسية للمنتج الزراعي المحلي من الخضر في محافظة بغداد

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الخلاصة

يهدف البحث الى التعرف على متطلبات تعزيز القدرة التنافسية للمنتج الزراعي المحلي من الخضر في محافظة بغداد، ولغرض تحقيق الهدف تم تحديد خمسة مجالات للتعرف على متطلبات تحقيق القدرة التنافسية للمنتج المحلي من الخضر في محافظة بغداد وشملت (تدريب مقدمي الخدمات الإرشادية، الأنشطة الإرشادية المقدمة لمزارعي الخضر، والمتطلبات الفنية لتحقيق جودة المنتج الزراعي المحلي من الخضر، والتشريعات والقوانين الحكومية، وكسب رضا المستهلك)، وبالرجوع إلى الدراسات السابقة وموضوع البحث تم استخدام الاستبانة لجمع هذه البيانات. أخذت عينة عشوائية من الموظفين العاملين بالإرشاد الزراعي في دائرة الإرشاد الزراعي والتدريب ومراكزه، ودائرة زراعة بغداد بفرعيها الكرخ والرصافة وأقسامها الزراعية وبلغ عددهم (114) موظف. أظهرت النتائج ان هناك اتفاقاً على المتطلبات التي تمت دارستها باعتبارها متطلبات ذات أهمية كبيرة للمستجوبين لتطوير قدراتهم، حيث جاءت متطلبات كسب رضا المستهلك في المرتبة الأولى حسب درجة أهميتها للمبحوثين بمتوسط مرجح (3.728) درجة. في حين جاءت متطلبات التشريعات والقوانين الحكومية في المرتبة الأخيرة حسب درجة الأهمية بالنسبة للمبحوثين، حيث كانت بمتوسط مرجح قدره (3.692) درجات. توصل البحث الى مجموعة من التوصيات أهمها ضرورة مراعاة هذه المتطلبات من قبل الدوائر الزراعية ذات العلاقة وخاصة دائرة الإرشاد والتدريب الزراعي، من خلال إخضاع موظفيها العاملين في الإرشاد الزراعي لبرامج تدريبية مكثفة لتمكينهم من القيام بواجباتهم في كيفية توجيه وتنقيف مزارعي الخضر بالمواصفات والمقاييس لتعزيز القدرة التنافسية للمنتج المحلي واعداد الأنشطة الإرشادية المقدمة لمزارعي الخضر التي تعزز جودة المنتج الزراعي وتطبيق التشريعات والقوانين الحكومية وتطبيقها من متطلبات كسب رضا المستهلك.

الكلمات المفتاحية: خدمات الاستشارات الزراعية، الإرشاد التسويقي، رضا المستهلك.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture occupies vital roles of importance in the global economy, securing decent livelihoods for individuals (Redmi & Capiti, 2019), and is thus a critical driver of economic growth and sustainable rural social development (Qamar, 2005), which is an essential aspect of the sustainability of human life and achieving food security. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines food security as "a situation in which all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their needs." food and their food preferences An active and healthy life" (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2021) Agriculture also provides employment opportunities, providing income for farmers, agribusinesses and other stakeholders involved in the value chain for the production of diverse agricultural crops, (Muhammad, 2021; Al- Daini, 2019) and has the potential to reduce poverty, especially in developing countries where smallholder farmers are prevalent, (Grossogi et al., 2020) and can provide opportunities to add value through processing, marketing and other activities along the value chain, creating resources. (Al-Taye et al., 2021; Mustafa, 2020).

In Iraq, agriculture (including vegetable cultivation) plays an important role in the national economy, providing employment and food security and contributing to the country's



GDP. (Al-Taye *et al.*, 2020; Asma & Lafta, 2023) and according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), about 20% of the total employment in Iraq is working in the agricultural sector (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2020). Vegetables are one of the most important nutrients that the population needs on a daily basis (Mahmoud & Elnoby, 2022), but local agricultural production only meets 30% of the population's need for agricultural products (Al-Taye & Al-Qaraqully, 2013), and therefore local vegetable production is no longer sufficient to meet the population's need, which forced the import of vegetables from neighboring countries (Al-Saadi & Al-naylle, 2014), as many countries, including Iraq, depend on importing large quantities of vegetables (Hamad, 2021; Al-Saedi & Al-Badri, 2022), to fill the shortfall in their local production. Iraq also faces challenges related to food security due to factors such as water scarcity, climate change and political instability in the world (Ray *et al.*, 2020).

Here comes the role of agricultural advisory services in addressing various challenges and reducing their effects faced by the agricultural sector, whether in the world or Iraq (Lafta & Al-Kafali, 2022). Agricultural extension services contribute to the sustainable development of the agricultural sector and rural communities by addressing one of the main challenges facing the agricultural sector is low productivity by providing farmers with up-to-date technical information and recommendations on crop and livestock management (Jihad & Bayan, 2021), soil and water conservation, and integrated pest management, which enables farmers to make informed decisions and adopt more efficient and sustainable agricultural practices, which positively increases productivity (Afful, 2020), in addition to its active role in enhancing the livelihoods of farmers by providing agricultural extension services that focus on developing the value chain, and access to markets, by linking farmers with input suppliers, manufacturers, traders and financial institutions (Muhaiabis & Hussein, 2019).

This requires of agricultural extension to raise the competitiveness of local basic agricultural crops, which enter the arena of competition with the rest of the agricultural products supplied from the markets of countries by providing farmers with the knowledge, skills, resources necessary, transfer technology and knowledge to farmers, providing them with information on the latest cultivation techniques, crop varieties and agricultural equipment to improve their agricultural practices, increase productivity, achieve sustainable development, as well as protecting the environment, reducing costs for farmers, and ensuring Long-term viability of the agricultural sector (pavlenko *et al.*, 2015), In addition to supporting agricultural extension programs that aim to provide farmers with practical training that will be reflected in the promotion of trade and investment in the agricultural sector by improving the quality and consistency of agricultural products in accordance with international standards for agricultural products (Anderson & Fedr, 2021), that achieving competitiveness and marketing agricultural products is one of the most important factors affecting the possibility of developing the agricultural sector (Al-Zubaidi & Hiyam, 2021), agricultural development is not achieved by the quantity of production, but by the ability to discharge and market this production at prices that return to farmers profits that enable it to cover production costs and the quality that falls within international standards (Al-Hafiz & Hussien, 2022). Accordingly, agricultural



extension services have become crucial in enhancing the competitiveness of vegetable crops in Iraq. Many agricultural extension workers view marketing problems as outside the scope of agricultural extension tasks, even if they can identify the marketing problems and competitiveness requirements faced by vegetable farmers, (**Kryuchkovi et al., 2020**) The lack of experience in the field of marketing and the conditions for achieving marketing efficiency and competitiveness, as well as the lack of information sources that can help them in this field, the absence of standards in the local agricultural product of vegetables and obstacles related to farmers themselves make them unable to provide the necessary assistance in the field of marketing (**Abu AL- Anin, 2019**). While less interest in the development of a market-oriented marketing culture that aims to achieve the competitiveness of local agricultural products based on scientific foundations among vegetable farmers (**Al-Hafiz, 2021**), despite the farmers' need for information on the requirements of Foreign markets in terms of varieties, quality and consumer desires necessary for competition and low experience in the application of modern agricultural practices On the pre-harvest and post-harvest crop (**swanson & Rika, 2014**).

To ensure the achievement and continued effectiveness of market-oriented agricultural extension, it is necessary to take into account the perception of agricultural extension workers of their role (**Hussein et al., 2021**), given the significant impact of perception and knowledge on job performance Competencies and skills of extension workers to provide market- and consumer-oriented agricultural extension services, and these competencies are crucial in reaching the correct knowledge of markets (**Mohammed, 2023**).

In view of the importance of the role of extension service providers in the extension institution and the responsibility that falls on their shoulders to carry out their extension tasks in the field of achieving the competitiveness of the local agricultural product / vegetables successfully, it is necessary to enable the extension institution to perform its role properly, so the research came to identify: Requirements for achieving the competitiveness of the local agricultural product of vegetables in Baghdad Province ? Since the extension service provider represents the main pillar for the success of the extension work in the extension organization by providing agricultural extension service in the field of achieving the competitiveness of the local agricultural product of vegetables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Community and Sample: The Baghdad province was chosen as an area to conduct the research because of its proximity to the source of the government decision related to the agricultural sector, as well as the presence of large numbers of workers in the field of providing extension service to farmers. As the research community included all workers in agricultural extension in Baghdad Province/ Al-Karkh, numbering (114) person for the year 2023, distributed over the Agricultural Extension and Training Department, the Baghdad Agriculture Department/ Al-Karkh and its agricultural divisions. Due to the small number of community members, and all members of the community were taken as a sample for research.

Data collection tool: The descriptive approach was used to conduct the research, the



questionnaire was adopted as a tool for data collection, as this method is considered an approved method in scientific research to collect data and use it to obtain information and facts related to the trends and opinions of the respondents (Al-Damen, 2006; Al-Jadiri, 2018). To achieve the objective of the research, (44) items were identified distributed over five areas: requirements for training extension service providers (14) items, requirements for extension activities provided to vegetable farmers (8) paragraphs, technical requirements to achieve the quality of the local agricultural product of vegetables (8) paragraphs, requirements of legislation and government laws (8) paragraphs, requirements for gaining consumer satisfaction (6) paragraphs after referring to scientific sources, studies and research on the subject, as well as the opinions of specialists on the subject from the University of Baghdad. To measure these requirements, a quadruple scale was used graded consisting of four levels according to the degree of importance (large requirement, medium requirement, low requirement, unimportant requirement) and weights were determined for them (4,3,2,1) respectively, with a hypothetical average of 2.5 degrees. After verifying the stability of the questionnaire, (114) questionnaires were distributed to the respondents included in the research, and the data was collected in October and November 2023, and after collecting the data, they were classified and analyzed using the statistical program (SPSS) as well as manual analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In light of the answers of the respondents from the agricultural extension workers on the requirements of the extension service to enhance the competitiveness of the local agricultural product of vegetables in the Baghdad province, the results were as follows:

1. Extension Service Provider Training Requirements:

The results of the research showed that there is agreement among all respondents on the existence of (14) realistic requirements related to the training of extension service providers to enhance the competitiveness of the local product of vegetables, where their answers ranged within the weighted mean of (3.317 - 3.570) and the average The total weighted is (3.637) degrees according to the degree of importance, and this weighted mean is higher than the hypothetical mean of the scale of (2.5) degrees. As in Table (1).



Table (1): Ordering the requirements in descending order according to the weighted averages and the degree of their importance according to the answers of agricultural extension workers.

Sort by questionnaire	Paragraphs	Weighted average	Sort in descending order
4	Urging extension service providers to benefit from the expertise and resources available at international organizations concerned with the cultivation, production and development of vegetable crops	3.719	1.5
7	Developing continuous communication of extension service providers with small farmers, producers, agricultural companies, government institutions and universities to exchange experiences to enhance the competitiveness of vegetable crops	3.719	1.5
6	Training extension service providers on communication, persuasion and influence skills when dealing with vegetable growers to adopt practices that enhance the competitiveness of vegetable crops	3.710	3
14	Establishing a marketing guidance unit within the guidance apparatus that enjoys the specificity of its extension programs to enhance the competitiveness of the local product of vegetables in the markets	3.657	4
3	Training and qualifying extension service providers to provide high quality services appropriate to the needs of vegetable farmers to meet the challenges when marketing their crops	3.640	5
1	Training extension service providers to arrange information according to its importance about modern techniques for the quality of vegetable crop cultivation	3.631	7
2	Follow-up extension service providers to the latest developments and innovations in the field of vegetable cultivation development	3.631	7
8	Educating extension service providers about the importance of the guiding role they play from the beginning of the cultivation of vegetable crops until the arrival of the agricultural product to the consumer	3.631	7
11	Providing effective means of communication for extension service providers to communicate with vegetable farmers to transfer agricultural information and guidance to them, such as mobile phones, desktop computers, e-mail, social media, and others.	3.622	8
13	Establishing a extension platform that allows extension service providers and vegetable growers to access agricultural information and guidance efficiently and effectively at any time	3.614	9
9	Develop mechanisms by the Extension Organization to monitor and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of agricultural extension services provided by extension service providers to vegetable growers to enhance the competitiveness of their vegetable crop products	3.605	10
5	Training extension service providers on how to manage time to ensure the implementation of activities and extension programs within the agricultural season for the production of vegetable crops	3.596	11



12	Conducting pilot studies to measure the satisfaction of vegetable farmers with the extension services provided in the field of enhancing the competitiveness of vegetable crops	3.578	12
10	Providing a database for extension service providers containing information on vegetable growers and their production within the target area	3.570	13
Average of the total weighted average = 3.637			

From Table (1), the results showed that the requirement of (urging extension service providers to take advantage of the expertise and resources available to international organizations concerned with the cultivation, production and development of vegetable crops) and (Developing continuous communication of extension service providers with small farmers, producers, agricultural companies, government institutions and universities to exchange experiences to enhance the competitiveness of vegetable crops) ranked first in terms of importance according to the opinion of the respondents with a weighted average of (3.719) degrees, and this may be attributed to the weak effective coordination and lack of communication channels between local agricultural extension workers and international organizations and limited access to training programs and workshops provided by international organizations. While the requirement (providing a database for extension service providers containing information on vegetable farmers and their production within the target area) came in the last order in terms of importance for the respondents with a weighted average of (3.570) degrees, and the reason may be attributed to the decentralization of agricultural operations and the randomness of the distribution of areas planted with vegetables in the Baghdad province.

2. Requirements of extension activities provided to vegetable farmers:

The results of the research showed that there is agreement among all respondents on the existence of (8) realistic requirements related to the extension activities provided to vegetable farmers to achieve the competitiveness of the local product of vegetables, where their answers ranged within the weighted medium of (3.710 - 3.201) and a total weighted average of (3.598) degrees, according to the degree of importance and this weighted mean is higher than the hypothetical mean of the scale of (2.5) degrees. As in Table (2).



Table (2): Arrange the requirements in descending order according to the weighted averages and the degree of their importance according to the answers of the agricultural extension workers.

Sort by questionnaire	Paragraphs	Weighted averages	Sort in descending order
1	Agricultural extension should have a role in changing the attitudes of vegetable farmers positively through its various extension programs and activities to enhance the competitiveness of the vegetable crop	3.710	1
3	Extension service providers inform vegetable growers of the standard conditions and specifications required to make their products highly competitive	3.701	2
8	Providing guidance advice to vegetable growers on the importance of the local agricultural product of vegetables to the local or foreign consumer and the possibility of marketing it to them	3.692	3
7	Teaching vegetable growers how to carry out post-harvesting operations such as sorting, grading and packaging of vegetable crops properly	3.666	4
2	Preparing and planning extension programs (seminars, courses, workshops, field visits, field days, etc.) to educate vegetable farmers about the importance of using modern agricultural technologies to increase production and improve its quality..	3.640	5
4	Extension service providers educate vegetable growers by introducing them to the vegetable products required in the local and international markets and their approximate prices	3.605	6
5	Informing vegetable growers through extension channels of the best periods of the agricultural season in which the demand for a particular agricultural product of vegetable crops increases	3.570	7
6	Providing vegetable farmers with information and guidance recommendations on the dates of harvesting the vegetable crop and taking care of collecting fruits, sorting, grading, packing and shipping them to the markets and how to reduce losses	3.201	8
Average of the total weighted average = 3.598			

From Table (2) the results showed that the requirement (that agricultural extension has a role in changing the attitudes of vegetable farmers positively through its various extension programs and activities to enhance the competitiveness of the vegetable crop) came in first place in terms of importance according to the opinion of the respondents with a weighted average of (3.710) degrees, and this may be attributed to the importance of the role of agricultural extension services in transferring knowledge and disseminating best agricultural



practices and adopting technology in the production and marketing of vegetables and helping farmers to reach Global markets While the requirement (providing vegetable farmers with information and recommendations guidance on the dates of harvesting the vegetable crop and taking care of collecting fruits, sorting, grading, packing and shipping them to the markets and how to reduce losses from them) came in the last order in terms of importance for the respondents with a weighted average of (3.201) degrees, and the reason may be attributed to the lack of agricultural activities and extension programs related to post-harvesting operations and strengthening value chains for the production of vegetable crops.

3. Technical requirements to achieve the quality of the local agricultural product of vegetables:

The results of the research showed that there is agreement among all respondents on the existence of (8) realistic requirements related to the technical aspects to achieve the quality of the local agricultural product of vegetables, where their answers ranged within the weighted medium of (3.701 - 3.552), and a total weighted average of (3.628) degrees, according to the degree of importance and this weighted mean is higher than the hypothetical mean of the scale of (2.5) degrees. As in Table 3.

Table (3): Arrange the requirements in descending order according to the weighted averages and the degree of their importance according to the answers of agricultural extension workers.

Sort by questionnaire	Paragraphs	Weighted averages	Sort in descending order
4	Agricultural products of vegetables should be free of residues of harmful substances and pesticides	3.701	1.5
6	Agricultural vegetable products should comply with recognized local and international standards to give them greater opportunities to compete	3.701	1.5
5	Agricultural products of vegetables should be packaged in an appropriate manner to maintain their quality and freshness during transportation and storage.	3.692	3
3	The local agricultural product of vegetables should be characterized by the ability to meet the needs of the market in terms of cost and availability in abundant quantities	3.640	4
1	The product of vegetable crops should be of high quality and conform to market requirements in terms of external shape, appropriate size, homogeneity, color, maturity and distinctive flavor	3.596	5
8	The process of harvesting, cleaning and packing fresh vegetable crops is carried out well on the farm to ensure that they are marketed with high efficiency	3.587	6



7	Agricultural products of vegetables should be displayed in packages of appropriate sizes and weights that facilitate the process of marketing, shipping and storage	3.561	7
2	Vegetable crops should be free of pests and diseases to ensure their competition and increase market demand for them	3.552	8
Total average weighted means =3.628			

From Table (3) the results showed that the requirement (that agricultural products of vegetables be free of residues of harmful substances and pesticides) came in first place in terms of importance according to the opinion of the respondents with a weighted average of (3.701) degrees, and this may be due to the importance of compliance with food safety requirements and product quality when exporting and competing with similar vegetable products locally, while the requirement came (that vegetable crops be free of pests and diseases to ensure their competition and increase market demand). in the last order in terms of importance for respondents with a weighted average of (3.552) degrees, and the reason may be attributed to the difficulty of obtaining phytosanitary certificates before shipping them for export.

4.Requirements of government legislation and laws:

The results of the research showed that there is agreement among all respondents on the existence of (8) requirements related to government legislation and laws, where their answers ranged within the weighted mean of (3.692 - 3.535), and a total weighted average of (3.603) degrees, according to the degree of importance and this weighted mean is higher than the hypothetical mean of the scale of (2.5) degrees. As in Table 4.

Table (4): Arrange the requirements in descending order according to the weighted averages and the degree of their importance according to the answers of agricultural extension workers.

Sort by questionnaire	Paragraphs	Weighted averages	Sort in descending order
1	Government follow-up in the application of legislation and decisions related to the protection of local agricultural products from vegetable crops	3.692	1
6	Establishing a real and independent government regulatory body to follow up and monitor the prices of local agricultural products of vegetables in the local markets (wholesale and single)	3.675	2
8	Encouraging and supporting manufacturing industries by the government to invest surplus vegetable products	3.640	3
5	Providing infrastructure (cold stores, transportation, roads, model markets, etc.) subsidized by the government to enhance the competitiveness of the local product of vegetable crops	3.614	4
7	Imposing taxes and fees through the application of the customs tariff law on imported vegetable products, which are a strong competitor to the local vegetable product	3.570	5



3	Establishing cooperative farms with government funding to exploit areas suitable for growing vegetables and under the supervision of agricultural extension to ensure the continuity and quality of production	3.561	6
4	Encouraging local and foreign companies to invest in the vegetable cultivation sector in accordance with crop quality standards by providing facilities, reducing tax fees and simplifying licensing procedures	3.543	7
2	Adopting a policy of price support for the local agricultural product of vegetables to control the fluctuation of the prices of vegetable products in the local markets, especially during times of high demand for them	3.535	8
Total average weighted means =3.603			

From Table (4), the results showed that the requirement (government follow-up in the application of legislation and decisions on the protection of the local agricultural product of vegetable crops) came in first place in terms of importance according to the opinion of the respondents with a weighted average of (3.692) degrees, and this may be attributed to its importance in protecting local vegetable products from unfair competition and imported goods without control, securing consumer protection and local producers and enhancing the competition market, while the requirement came (adopting a price support policy for the product). Local agricultural vegetables to control the fluctuation of the prices of vegetable products in the local markets, especially times of high demand) in the last order in terms of importance for the respondents with a weighted average of (3.535) degrees, and the reason may be attributed to the weak possibility of allocating additional financial resources from the government in addition to the existence of a strong administrative framework for price control

5. Requirements for gaining consumer satisfaction:

The results of the research showed that there is agreement among all respondents on the existence of (6) requirements related to gaining consumer satisfaction, where their answers ranged within the weighted mean of (3.728 - 3.570), and a weighted mean total of (3.638) degrees, according to the degree of importance and this weighted mean is higher than the hypothetical mean of the scale of (2.5) degrees. As in Table 5.



Table (5): Ordering the requirements in descending order according to the weighted averages and the degree of their importance according to the answers of the agricultural extension workers.

Sort by questionnaire	Paragraphs	Weighted averages	Sort in descending order
5	The local product of vegetables should be available in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of consumers	3.728	1
4	Agricultural products of vegetables should be displayed in packages of sizes and weights suitable for the consumer's tastes and purchasing power	3.684	2
3	The local agricultural product of vegetables should be characterized by its availability throughout the agricultural season and according to the consumer's desire	3.675	3
6	Convincing the consumer of the importance of encouraging and buying local vegetable products by promoting the product well	3.596	4
1	The local product of vegetables should be fresh and of high quality and meet the tastes of consumers	3.578	5
2	The prices of the local product should be suitable for the purchasing power of most consumers	3.570	6
Total average weighted means = 3.638			

From Table (5) the results showed that the requirement (that the local product of vegetables is available in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of consumers) came in first place in terms of importance according to the opinion of the respondents with a weighted average of (3.728) degrees, and this may be attributed to its importance in achieving food security and reducing imports down to self-sufficiency, while the requirement (that the prices of the local product be appropriate for the purchasing power of most consumers) came in the last order in terms of importance for the respondents with a weighted mean of (3.570) degrees, and the reason may be attributed to its conflict with the interests of local producers and the difficulty of covering production costs and competition with cheaper goods imported from other countries.

To show the importance of the requirements of the extension service to achieve the competitiveness of vegetable crops in general: The results showed that the weighted circles of the areas of requirements according to the degree of importance to the respondents ranged from (3.728 - 3.692) degrees, and a weighted average of (3.71) degrees, which is higher than the degree of the hypothetical mean of the scale of (2.5) degrees, and this confirms the importance of the requirements of the indicative service to enhance the competitiveness of the local product of vegetables, and this gives an indication that The studied requirements are really realistic and very important, which requires standing at them and applying them by the concerned authorities and decision-makers. As in Tables (6):



Table (6): Arrange the areas of requirements in descending order according to the weighted medium of their importance according to the answers of the agricultural extension workers.

Sort by questionnaire	Areas of obstacles	Weighted averages	Sort in descending order
5	Requirements for gaining consumer satisfaction	3.638	1
1	Extension Service Provider Training Requirements	3.637	2
3	Technical requirements for achieving the quality of the domestic agricultural product of vegetables	3.628	3
4	Requirements for government legislation and laws	3.603	4
2	Requirements for extension activities provided to vegetable growers	3.598	5
Total average weighted means = 3.620			

From Table (6) the results showed that the requirements of gaining consumer satisfaction came in first place according to the degree of importance to the respondents, with a weighted average of (3.728) degrees, and the reason for this may be due to its decisive role in determining the success of demand for local vegetable products and their competitiveness in the markets by achieving satisfaction with the quality of vegetables and their availability in quantities that meet demand during the agricultural seasons and their appropriate prices and diversity, which increases the demand for them. While the requirements of government legislation and laws came in the last order according to the degree of importance to the respondents, as they were with a weighted average of (3.692) degrees, and this may be attributed to the weak activation of control over local markets and reducing the entry of similar agricultural products at the peak time of local production by illegal means, high costs and requirements for vegetable production and price disparity between the local product and the imported product.

CONCLUSIONS

Achieving the competitiveness of the local agricultural product of vegetables requires the availability of a number of requirements, including (requirements for training extension service providers, providing extension activities provided to vegetable farmers , providing technical aspects to achieve the quality of the local agricultural product of vegetables, government legislation and laws and requirements for gaining consumer satisfaction) that must be provided by extension services related to the cultivation and production of vegetable crops in Baghdad .

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommended the need to take these requirements into account by the relevant agricultural departments, especially the Department of Agricultural Extension and Training, by subjecting its employees working in agricultural extension to intensive and



studied training programs to enable them to carry out their duties on how to guide and educate vegetable farmers with specifications and standards to enhance the competitiveness of the local product and prepare extension activities provided to vegetable farmers and provide technical requirements that enhance the quality of agricultural product and the application of government legislation and laws and the application of Requirements for gaining consumer satisfaction.

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