



Bias in stakeholder communication?

The importance of actors in agriculture: results of a quick scan.

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Introduction

Agriculture involves all kinds of stakeholders (e.g. policy makers, researchers and consumers' organisations). The tendency to consider agriculture broader than primary production alone, with more attention given to nature and landscape production, environmental quality etc., increases the number of stakeholders even more. It is not well known how newcomers are treated, e.g. if they are included in existing platforms like research networks. Two questions are raised here. First, how much importance do researchers assign to different groups of stakeholders? Second, to what extent are the different groups included in their networks?

Communication bias

The questions are answered by using a quick scan. Key figures in Wageningen University and Research Centre were asked to indicate the relevance of stakeholder groups. Results are presented in figure 1. Stakeholders involved in primary production, nature and landscape production and environment are considered the most important. Stakeholders in waste conversion and social functions are the least relevant. Important stakeholder groups include primary producers, researchers, consumers' organisations and agribusiness. Attention these groups receive from research is given in figure 2. Researchers mainly focus on colleagues and policy makers on primary production, nature and landscape production and the environment. Stakeholders in waste conversion and social functions are much less in scope. There thus is a difference between importance assigned to stakeholders and the role they play in research networks. There is a tendency to pay more attention to researchers and policy makers while less easy accessible stakeholders (primary producers, consumers organisations and agribusiness) are less in focus. This suggests a bias exists towards policy makers and researchers and - in general - stakeholders active in primary production and nature and landscape production at the cost of consumers organizations, primary producers and agribusiness.

Figure 1. Relevance of actors involved in different functions of agriculture.

Actors	Functions				
	Waste conversion	Primary production	Nature and landscape	Social functions	Environment
Policy makers		XXX	XXX	X	XXX
Consumers' groups: food safety		XXX	X	X	XX
Consumers' groups: nature and landscape	X	X	XXXXX	XXX	XXX
Primary producers	X	XXXXX	XX	X	XX
Agrobusiness	X	XXXX	X		XX
Researchers	X	XXX	XXX	XX	XXXX

Figure 2. Relevance of actors involved in agriculture, as expressed by the number of z interactions they have with Wageningen University and Research Centre.

Actors	Functions				
	Waste conversion	Primary production	Nature and landscape	Social functions	Environment
Policy makers	X	XXX	XXX	X	XXX
Consumers' groups: food safety		X			
Consumers' groups: nature and landscape		X	XX	X	X
Primary producers		XXX	X	X	X
Agrobusiness	X	XX			X
Researchers	X	XXX	XXX	XX	XXX

Give us your opinion

We are curious to see how this is in other countries. Therefore we invite you to give us your estimation. What role do these stakeholder groups play in your network? Do primary production stakeholders get most attention? Give us your view! It will be used to do the same analyse as was done above for the Netherlands. Let us know; we'll describe the view of the participants of this workshop. Use the stickers you will find on this poster and stick them to the next figure. If you consider one relation very important, give it 5 stickers. If relevant but not so important, 3 stickers. If you consider it only slightly relevant, please give only one sticker. No relevance means no sticker. We intend to present the results by the end of the conference.

Figure 3. Relevance of actors involved in different functions of agriculture, as perceived by workshop participants.

Actors	Functions				
	Waste conversion	Primary production	Nature and landscape	Social functions	Environment
Policy makers					
Consumers' groups: food safety					
Consumers' groups: nature and landscape					
Primary producers					
Agrobusiness					
Researchers					