



European Network for the durable exploitation of crop protection strategies

IA3 Activity: Human resource exchange

ENDURE - Internal Mobility

Final activity report

(The form has to be filled in and sent to the activity leader – message should be sent to his p.a. elisa.scanzi@ibaf.cnr.it – within 15 days after the end of the visit)

1. Information about researcher and sending partner

Name and surname: *Silke Dachbrodt-Saaydeh*

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* Supervisor information only for PhD student, post-doc and junior researchers

2. Information about hosting partner

Hosting partner: *Rothamsted Research*

Institute/Department/Research Unit: *Information and Liaison*

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* For senior scientist indicate the name of the collaborating colleague

3. Information about the visit

Duration: 2 weeks

Start date: June 9th, 2008

End date: June 20th, 2008

4. Topic of the visit

A study exploring the management of information within the Organisation and the transfer of knowledge to different stakeholders outside the Organisation

- *Status quo analyses of information transfer regarding scientific knowledge for the reduction of pesticide use in the UK*
- *Exploring the communication of science and scientific knowledge to the different stakeholder group in UK society*

5. Links between visit activity and priority areas

- *This study provided additional information about the knowledge transfer from science to field (linked with SA1), the communication of science (IA4) and explored the role science can play for informing different stakeholders (SA4, e.g. advisors and policy makers).*
- *Study of approaches and experiences in the management and communication of crop protection issues and promotion of the implementation of knowledge management (IA4).*

Date of submission

10.07.2008

Accomplishment:

Knowledge transfer from science to field and the communication of science

This mobility activity consisted of the participation at the 2 days Cereals 2008, the leading technical event for the arable industry in the UK, desk study work and a visit to Brooms Barn Applied Crop Sciences.

At the Cereals 2008 event Rothamsted Research was represented with an exhibition site displaying different research activities and researchers communicating with the visitors. The event offered a perfect opportunity to conduct interviews with the different bodies and organizations engaged in extension and for analyses of

the knowledge transfer. Therefore interviews with key persons of advisory services, research institutes, levy bodies and private consultants were conducted.

General findings

The UK system of advisory system is very diverse. Levy bodies such as the British Beet Research Organisation (BBRO) play a very important role in advising farmers and adapting and transferring crop specific scientific information to farmers. Private organisations constitute a very big part of the advisory services for farmers and state extension services are basically non-existent.

R&D transfer from science to extension

The interviewed key persons represent the human interface between science and farming for their institutions. The contact to all relevant scientific information is very intense and based on a great personal experience. Their awareness of scientific development and new research results pertinent for the implementation in practice is based on a very deep understanding of science. In all types of organisations research trials are carried out to a certain extent mostly driven by the need for new solutions or identified potentials of new strategies for the farming sector. In many cases such applied research is conducted in cooperation with the industry. This constitutes an additional knowledge and funding source.

The RRA (Rothamsted Research Association)¹ seeks to forge and sustain beneficial links between scientists and those involved in the diverse practices of agricultural businesses. It provides privileged access to the latest developments in agricultural research, direct contact with scientists, interactive workshops and technical demonstrations on targeted research topics. All advisory organisations are members of RRA either on personal member ships or as institutions.

Another type of knowledge development and transfer are LINK Projects² which are collaborative projects of research, extension and industry. Such projects are initiated by DEFRA and funded by the government and the industry.

Knowledge transfer from extension to the field

The research and trials results from the advisory system constitute the base for the knowledge transfer to farmers. The scientific knowledge is not transmitted directly to the farmer and a great deal of intermediate adaptation and field trials are carried out. The knowledge is transmitted by group activities and participatory forms such as winter meetings, workshops, open and field days, etc.

Advisory services such as TAG (The arable group)³ and AICC (Association of Independent Crop Consultants)⁴ see their foremost role in advisory services for farmers according to their requests and needs to optimize production and maximize yields. Holistic approaches such as IPM are not explicitly covered by TAG; it is incorporated by AICC in their advice to farmers.

Velcourt⁵ is an enterprise for farm management implements advanced farming approaches ensuring best strategies for their farm managers. The strategies are developed and validated in trials ensuring application

¹ <http://www.rothra.org/index.php>

² <http://defrafarmingandfoodscience.csl.gov.uk/linkprogrammeoverview.cfm>

³ <http://thearablegroup.com/>

⁴ <http://www.aicc.org.uk/newsite/introduction.asp>

⁵ <http://www.velcourt.co.uk/>

of best methods. The farm managers work as advisors as well passing the information and experiences on to farmers. Yearly feed back sessions are held to update on the results. The Velcourt research unit is having yearly speed dating sessions with scientists from RRes to update on new developments.

RRA aims to ensure that new scientific knowledge of relevance to agricultural management practices is rapidly transferred in a usable form. Members, including farmers, land-owners, consultants, advisors, industry representatives and policy makers can access a wide range of information and participate in workshops and seminars organised with scientists. Additionally they receive the RRA newsletter on latest scientific developments in a comprehensive form.

Conclusion

This study revealed that there is an increasing gap of transforming the scientific knowledge into applied knowledge for farmers. This development is due to increasing detachment of research from applied science and the decreasing human resources. This should be borne in mind for future decisions on interfaces of knowledge transfer. The privatisation of several organisations such as ADAS increased the lack of resources. The collaboration of research and industry or business enterprises in LINK Projects is able to deliver a very valuable contribution the transfer of knowledge and the adaptation of the knowledge for the farmers. The contributions of organisations like Brooms Barn which comprise a very suitable combination of research and applied science in farming is very efficient and are able to transmit an overall view and more than practical information on the optimisation of farming.

The question which impacts and benefits science is generating for the farming sector and the society in general should be investigated as well as the role science plays in the knowledge transfer chain.



Dr. Maurizio Sattin
IA3 activity leader

Approved