

Argument A 3	<h1>FARMER IMAGE</h1>
	Social

Date (01/02/2010)

WHAT IS	<p>'Farmer image' is the mental representation that non-farmers have of farmers. Here we are emphasising the difference between the image farmers would like to project and the image they believe they actually have. It is one aspect of the social pressure placed on farmers and contributes to the social identity of the profession.</p>
WHY	<p>Most farmers are proud of their profession, and have invested in innovative and pro-environment approaches. However, they often feel that their efforts are not recognised and that the negative aspects of conventional agriculture are over-emphasised. Engaging farmers in a discussion on how they are perceived is an excellent way of introducing them to the idea that IPM can help them improve that image and gain positive recognition.</p>
HOW	<p>Invite farmers to discuss their image by asking them about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Today's image of farmers in society. ▶ The image that they would like to project. ▶ Anecdotes involving family, neighbours, friends, school, media.... <p>Then, steer the discussion onto environmentally friendly practices or specifically IPM and how they can improve farmer image, for example, among the farming community through the recognition of IPM in legislation, among the retail industry due to the visibility of some IPM practices, or by using IPM when communicating with the public.</p> <p>Draw on the following ideas and use information pertinent to your own context to support your point (examples are given in each topic):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Non-farmers are interested in farmers: Every year, the International Agricultural Fair in Paris attracts increasing numbers of visitors (670 000 in 2009, two-thirds of whom have no connection to farming). ▶ Farmers invest time and money into improving their image: The UK farmer organisation LEAF has a large programme devoted to restoring public confidence in the farming industry with Open Farm Sundays and self-help tools to prepare farmers for public speaking. ▶ Farmers are sensitive to social pressure: A survey of 205 arable crop farmers in France conducted by social psychologists

	showed that, even though economic and environmental considerations matter very much to farmers, it is improving their public image which most strongly determines their commitment to pro-environmental action.
SOURCES	Linking Environment And Farming. www.leafuk.org Michel-Guillou, E & Moser, G. 2006. Commitment of farmers to environmental protection: From social pressure to environmental conscience. J. Environmental Psychology 26(3): 227-235.