



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 84

Success factors for engaging stakeholders in sustainable agriculture

In the Agrilink Living Labs stakeholders work together to develop innovation support tools that contribute to making agriculture more sustainable. It is more straightforward to work with stakeholders on improving the socio-economic aspects of agriculture since this is of the direct short term interests of the stakeholders. It is however quite a challenge to engage stakeholders in realising the longer term public private objectives such as reducing the environmental impact of agriculture.

The project Grondig Boeren met Mais, focuses on making maize cultivation in the south-east of the Netherlands more sustainable. The project has generated much attention and engagement of farmers, advisors and other agricultural intermediaries. As part of the Agrilink living lab, the experiences in Grondig boeren met Mais were analyzed and the success factors for engaging farmers in sustainability endeavours were identified. Below are some recommendations and lessons learned for working with stakeholders to make agriculture more sustainable.

1. Invite farmers to express their interest and create the agenda with topics for research and demonstration together
2. Combine demonstrations on a research farm with demonstrations at farms of participating farmers. This way, the farmer can imagine what it will look like on his own farm.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3. Spread the field demonstrations across the region. This way you bring it closer to the farmer's world of experience and he can ask questions and hear experiences from nearby neighbours.
4. Organise a dedicated project team with standards and values that are consistent with practice.
5. Organize your project as a platform and stimulate interaction between research institutions and local stakeholders.
6. Let stakeholders participate in the decision-making about the project activities and the research agenda.
7. Give sufficient attention to communication and involving stakeholders and sharing insights. These recommendations can help to strengthen the cooperation between researchers, advisory service providers, and practitioners in making agriculture more sustainable.

Further reading:

- (Dutch) In gesprek met de boer over mais. Project: Grondig Boeren met Mais. Published in POP Regiebureau, themanummer Bodem, page 11-14, augustus 2019
- (Dutch) Pitch Project Grondig Boeren met Mais, juli 2019



ABOUT AGRILINK

Agrilink is a multi-actor project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It brings together 16 partners from 13 countries, including universities, applied research institutes, advisors and consultants from public organisations, private SMEs, a farmer-based organisation and specialists in communication and distance learning.

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