



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 11

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What is the problem with "good practice"?

"Good practices" are frequently referred to in agriculture. There are two different uses of this notion: 1) "Non-prescriptive": Interactions about "good practices" aim at sharing experience and know-how (production, advice) when observations show that for similar productions good performances can be obtained through a variety of practices. This information may help in decision making; what is a "good" practice may vary according to the objectives of the action, the context, etc. 2) "Prescriptive": Description of "good practices" is provided to stakeholders in order to set the norms of their activity. These norms can be used for various purposes (regulation, subsidies release, etc.). In this case, if a "good practice" is being legally prescribed (e.g. to specify how to use a pesticide), it will contribute to determining the liability of various stakeholders in case of an adverse effect (e.g. environmental pollution, health). This distinction between prescriptive and non-prescriptive approaches is important: what is 'good practice' on one farm may not lead to positive outcomes on another one, or may even have adverse effects. The normative use of the notion should be clearly identified and considered as such. It should not prevent from being curious and interact about the plurality of actual practices that coexist at the farm level, to discuss their innovative dimension, and to compare their performances. In agriculture, good outcomes are seldom achieved via a single, agreed 'best practice'. Thus, discussing "good practices" in a non-prescriptive approach may help design new advisory services.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This Practice Abstract is derived from one of 27 Theory Primers that support the conceptual framework which underpins the AgriLink project. Each Theory Primer introduces a specific theoretical topic in the conceptual framework and is intended primarily for academic readers. The Practice Abstracts derived from each Theory Primer aim to make these topics more accessible and understandable to a wider non-academic audience.

The AgriLink Conceptual Framework and all Theory Primers can be found here: <https://www.agrilink2020.eu/our-work/conceptual-framework/>



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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All the Practice Abstracts prepared by the AgriLink project in the EIP-AGRI common format can be found here: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/agrilink-agricultural-knowledge-linking-farmers>