



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 137

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How to deal with bias in farm advisory services: a focus on transparency and robustness to reinforce the impartiality of advice

Farm advisory services are expected to play a key role for sustainable transition in the context of the next Common Agricultural Policy. This new regulation engages Member States to draw national strategic visions that guarantee that farmers would benefit from “independent and impartial” advice. Based on findings at the level of farmers’ microAKIS, we argue that it might be very difficult to delimitate the boundaries of such independent and impartial advice. As a consequence, we propose to focus on the guarantee of reliability and transparency of the back-office of farm advice. The reason for this is that bias in farm advisory services may appear at different levels. The most obvious situations are in front-office, when services are delivered jointly with goods: pesticides, fertilisers, machinery, software, etc. But bias might also be linked to the back-office dimension of services. For instance, our results show that some private consultants, who only sell advisory services to farmers and thus could be characterised as independent, have pesticide traders as their main source of knowledge and training. Also, bias might occur in informal network, where the sources of some technical knowledge shared by farmers is hard to trace back. Our interactions with stakeholders enabled to illustrate options to enhance transparency and reliability of farm advice. This includes collective actions from farmers such as the organisation of demonstration activities with advisors from different organisations or training about how to search and sort digital information. Moreover, it appears very important to maintain public investments and/or public organisations that could provide scientific assessment allowing comparison of competing technologies.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Practice abstracts, from 101 to 141 can be found here:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/agrilink-agricultural-knowledge-linking-farmers-0>



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:
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