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Deliverable 5.3

Best Practice Materials

WP6: Case studies of demonstration activities on commercial farms



PLAID
PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING:
ACCESSING INNOVATION
THROUGH DEMONSTRATION



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Deliverable Lead: Anne-Charlotte Dockes

Related Work package:

Author(s): Anne-Charlotte Dockes, Marleen Gysen, Boelie Elzen

Contributor(s): Lies Debruyne and AgriDemo

Reviewer(s): Lee-Ann Sutherland

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ABSTRACT

The public-facing outputs of good practice in on-farm demonstration have been developed collaboratively across the PLAID WPs and with AgriDemoF2F. Findings from WP5 have been integrated into the information notes in WP2 (D2.3) and the information notes produced in WP6 (6 policy briefs, instead of 1). 37 Videos on on-farm demonstration are available on the farmdemo hub: <https://trainingkit.farmdemo.eu/video-channel>, as well as a video on how to increase interaction during on-farm events.

This document brings together six information notes produced on good practices for organizing and carrying out on-farm demonstrations:

1. Participant Profiles: Reaching a balanced variety of visitors
2. Activity Access: improving access to on-farm demonstration activities
3. Monitoring and Evaluation: Tuning demonstrations to the needs of participants
4. Mediation: Methods to enhance knowledge exchange
5. Demonstration: A way to make novelties "your own"
6. Connecting people in Demo events: Provide space to foster diverse forms of exchange



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Participant Profiles

Reaching a balanced diverse audience

PLAID - D5.3- Information Note n°1 - 15 June 2019

The Challenge: support attendance of underrepresented visitor groups

In several of the PLAID case studies the demonstrators complained that it was always the same profile of people that attended demonstrations. In many cases, the majority were older men, over 40 years of age. Organisers and demonstrators likewise tend to be mostly men although there were some exceptions in our cases where the main organiser was a woman. In some countries these imbalances may become a serious threat to the longer-term sustainability of agriculture because of a lack of successors for retiring farmers.

PLAID Lessons: good practices to attract a variety of demonstration visitors

One might argue that the 'older men dominance' in attending demonstrations can be expected because this reflects the composition of the community of farmers and farming organisations. However, demonstrations are usually inspired by the motivation to change things, to make farming more sustainable, and demographic aspects are part of that. In that respect, there are some serious imbalances in the present farmers' community, largely being composed of older men while younger people and women are clearly underrepresented. Organisers of demonstrations could then make an extra effort to make a demonstration attractive for these groups. This is especially true because demonstrations feature the real farming experience and the most effective way to recruit new groups for any type of profession is to let them experience directly what it is about.

Various demonstrators indicate that male farmers are more attracted to the 'hard' side of agriculture, to equipment and machinery. Female farmers tend to be more attracted to the soft side, preferring more direct contact with plants and animals. Results from the PLAID project indicate that two of the types of demonstration are more likely to include women, namely 'environmentally sustainable horticulture / orcharding' which focuses on a broad sustainability approach with a focus on environmental improvements, and 'farmer led community development' which focuses on the development of social capital in rural communities (mostly animal husbandry or general demonstrations) and may also attract many non-farming visitors. The more production-oriented demonstration cluster-types tend to be male focused, some of them strongly.

This suggests that there are two general paths to attract minority groups to demonstrations. The first is to organise more demonstrations in areas that are attractive to these groups. This is the case, for instance, in organic farming or animal production where the male dominance is less prominent. The second is to modify the 'hard' production-oriented demonstrations by introducing a more general sustainability focus and making this clear in the invitation to the demonstration. In both cases, the promotion campaign to announce the demonstration could be more targeted towards these groups. In view of the 'succession problem' this might also be used to attract people from outside the farming community who may be considering becoming a farmer ('new entrants').

Examples of strengths and weaknesses, tips and tricks from PLAID case studies

In a Belgian case, a dedicated attempt was made to attract several minority groups to a potato demonstration by teaming up with organisations that represent these groups. By cooperating with organisations like KVLV-Agra (organisation for female farmers) and Groene Kring (“Green Circle”; young farmers’ organisation), the organisers were able to attract various visitors beyond the dominant type of farmer.

Whereas at most demonstrations the large majority of visitors are older men and female visitors often account for less than 10%, the Swiss Organic Cattle Day 2018 showed a much more even distribution. The organisers made a deliberate attempt to not only attract farmers who are generally very engaged in the organic movement but also others, more from the ‘middle’, as they called it. Although they knew many of the attendants, they were successful in attracting also many unknown people. In a total, there were 500-600 visitors while all ages were represented and about one-third of them were women. Interestingly, about 30% of the visitors were conventional farmers or converting to organic.

A Croatian case on greenhouse vegetables showed even a further gender shift. The target group were students from an agricultural college, their professors and advisors from the region and the objective was to transfer knowledge and exchange experience on integrated and greenhouse production. The majority of the participating students were female. According to an accompanying teacher, this reflected a change in the school’s student population, which had recently changed to a 60% majority of female students. About 20% of the visitors were also young farmers working back home on their family farms, some of whom would take over the farm after their graduation. These ‘aspiring’ farmers were given special attention at the demonstration by interacting with them more intensely and addressing the issues that they encountered or might encounter in their own practice.

Another Croatian case, the ‘wheat & barley day’, illustrates how a demonstration can be made attractive to ‘outsiders’ by adding fun-elements. One attraction was the offer of free food and beverages. Furthermore, traditional music was played to create a party atmosphere. For people without transportation means there was free bus transportation from and to the city centre. Such an approach will lower the threshold for citizens to attend a demonstration which can be important to connect the farming community with society at large and may also be a way to give potential new entrants a way to learn what farming in practice may be about.

In the Scottish case of the Lothian Monitor Farm, a pro-active approach was taken towards attracting participants through social media and from local societies and universities. This resulted in visitors having a younger age profile than would have been expected otherwise. A substantial number of young farmers that participated in the Community Group, mostly in the 30-40 years age group. Part of the reason for this was believed to be due to one of the Monitor Farmers being in this age category and involved in encouraging his peer group to come along. The group attracted a few under 30s (a ‘rarity’ in the industry), which is considered important for the future of agriculture in the area, including mentoring and succession planning.

The Croatian example above, as well as a French case on livestock farming, show that some demonstrations explicitly target younger people by inviting students from farming schools and colleges. We have seen no examples, however, where women were an explicit target audience although there were some examples where the majority of visitors were female. In the Croatian case, this reflected the composition of the school that the visiting students attended. In a Norwegian case on optimal soil culture, this was attributed to the focus of the demonstration on organic farming that appears to attract more women than conventional agriculture does. In the Latvian animal husbandry case there was a clear gender bias towards female participants in demonstrations dealing with dairy cattle, while a much more equal split between male and female participants was observed in the case of beef cattle and sheep farming communities, thus indicating notable national and sectoral differences.



Activity Access

Improving access to on-farm demonstration activities

PLAID - D5.3- Information Note n°2 - 15 June 2019

The Challenge: improve access to on-farm demonstration activities

Taking measures to ensure that events are advertised to all target groups, and the facilities at the event suited to a wide range of abilities, will increase the accessibility of on-farm demonstration for all actors. In the PLAID case studies, we found various examples of events which were predominantly visited by visitors that were not well informed and were unaware of what was happening at the demonstration event and were unable to follow certain activities.

PLAID Lessons: good practices to facilitate good access

At the demonstration event, it is important to enable participants to participate in all of the planned activities. Particularly for larger demonstrations, with various activities running in parallel, it is much more of a challenge to give visitors a good overview of what will happen and to help them to find the activities that are most interesting to them. A simple tool is to provide a brochure or leaflet with the main parts of the programme and to explain the main features of the programme during an introductory talk at the opening of the demonstration. For very large demonstrations it is also useful to provide a helpdesk or assistance desk. To allow visitors to follow their own path through the demo programme, it is important to carefully plan the timing of the various activities and to entrust a number of people with the responsibility to ensure that this timing is kept for all activities.

The case studies show that there are some other organisational issues that are not always well addressed, making it difficult or impossible to follow certain activities. One of these is sound quality. This is usually not an issue indoors, but for outdoor activities speakers are often not well audible due to the background noise, including wind, machinery, etc. Even with an outdoor sound installation this can be problematic, especially when the public takes part in the discussion without the use of a microphone. In such a case, a pragmatic solution is when the person with the microphone (speaker or facilitator) repeats the question or gives the microphone to the person who reacts. Though this may seem trivial, this was not always observed in many of the case studies. A more fundamental solution is to make group sizes small enough so that audibility is not a problem.

Video (also on-screen presentation) quality can also be an issue, especially outdoors or in tents that should be properly addressed. One thing is to make sure that strong sunlight will not hamper visibility.

Toilet facilities are also not always sufficient or are of a low standard. In one case, no toilet facilities were provided at all, which is particularly unwelcoming for female participants. Disabled facilities should be made available where possible.

Furthermore, at the demonstrations studied there were rarely any provisions for people who are unable to walk for long distances or cannot stand for long periods of time. People with such limitations may decide not to attend a demonstration because they expect it will be difficult for them

to get access to various activities. It is recommended that organisers take specific measures to make it attractive to people with physical limitations: providing seating, level surfaces on which to walk etc. Indicating this in the invitation could encourage more people to participate and would therefore open up demonstrations to a group of people that would otherwise be excluded.

Examples from PLAID case studies of practices that have worked to increase access

At the Swiss organic cattle day, microphones were made available for several activities. In those sessions where the microphone were not used and where there was a lot of background noise, the level of attention dropped quite quickly and the participants started chatting and discussing among small groups while the speaker was still presenting. This happened in different cases, where speakers would not repeat questions that were asked to ensure everyone understood. The level of participation also depended on the volume of a speakers' voice and on the visibility of what was demonstrated.

Concerning sound, at the Latvian demonstration on animal husbandry a portable microphone and loudspeaker were used to allow all visitors to follow the narrative. As for visibility, a good solution used was to place the demonstration object (including livestock units) in a place that could be approached by visitors from several sides, thus avoiding crowding in a small area.

A new approach to allow larger groups of visitors to follow what was going on was used at the Polish national potato day. This involved the use of a drone to record the activities and display these on a big screen on a podium. The practicalities of this approach, however, still require further improvement. By just showing the video, it was not clear to visitors what they were observing and there appeared to be rather limited attention for these videos.

Various specific measures were taken at demonstrations to assist visitors in following the various activities. At the UK integrated farm management field event, tractor trailers were used to drive visitors from one activity to another. These were covered as a precaution in the case of bad weather. For the same reason refreshments were provided indoors, enabling the event to continue in the case of rain. On the day of the event, however, the weather appeared to be very sunny which caused a new, unforeseen problem. Excess light affected the visibility of the video played during lunch as well as affected the panel presentations.

At the Dutch grounded maize cropping demonstration, a 'multifunctional vehicle' was used that provided a podium with sound installation as well as an issue point for refreshments. This was provided by one of the organisers and it is also made available for use at similar field demonstrations by others.

A good way to connect visitors to the demonstration event is to provide food based on products from the region. This was done, for instance, at the Italian demo day for sustainable viticulture. Providing ample time for eating and drinking also served as a good occasion for interaction and networking between visitors, as well as between visitors and demonstrators.

In the PLAID cases we observed a general tendency to see the number of visitors as an indicator of success of the demonstration. However, larger numbers may attend at the expense of the quality of the demonstration, making it more difficult for visitors to follow what goes on. For that reason, the Italian organic farming demo decided to limit the number of participants per demo event to facilitate good quality interaction. In the case where there was a greater interest, the organizer preferred to repeat the event instead of enlarging it. Also at the UK integrated farm management field event the number of participants was limited (to 90 people) due to constraints with space on the tractor trailer.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Tuning demonstrations to the needs of visiting farmers

PLAID - D5.3- Information Note n°3 - 15 June 2019

The Challenge: meeting the needs of visiting farmers

To assess the success of a demonstration, it is key to evaluate how it actually worked out. Our cases show that organisers typically do evaluate a past demonstration, but they tend to do so somewhat intuitively, based on their own impressions of what happened. PLAID partners collected more structured data on the demonstrations which they subsequently analysed and shared with the demonstration organisers. Most of the organisers found this feedback very useful: a clear indication of the value of such 'monitoring & evaluation' (M&E) activities for them.

PLAID Lessons: good practices to monitor and evaluate demonstrations

In the case studies, PLAID partners collected considerable information on demonstrations, including feedback from demonstration visitors via questionnaires and focus groups. The topics addressed included what visitors liked the most or the least, which other things they wanted to be informed on, etc. For this form of monitoring a simple and effective monitoring tool was developed in the form a brief questionnaire for demonstration participants. The main questions were derived from the key aspects of the demonstration objective.

After the demonstration, PLAID partners evaluated the monitoring findings with the organisers. Although many demo organisers had not explicitly formulated objectives beforehand, in most cases this helped them to obtain a more nuanced picture of the success of their demonstration. The topics addressed at these evaluations included:

- To obtain better knowledge of the profile of visitors (e.g. numbers, age, gender, farming profile);
- To get a better feel for what motivates visiting farmers and what they need;
- To better plan and shape follow-up activities;
- To improve the next version of a demonstration;
- To collect contact details of visiting farmers to be able to continue interaction with them which may help to increase the impact of the demonstration.

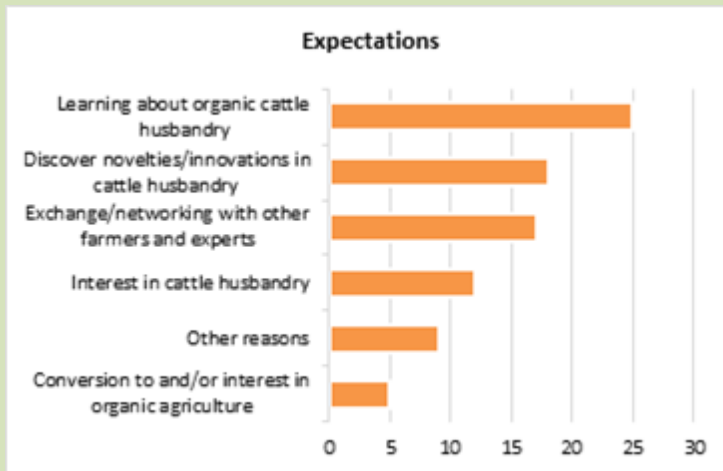
In the PLAID project, a deliberate choice was made to make the questionnaire a rather simple monitoring tool rather than an extensive one. This was to create a low threshold for demonstration organisers to use it themselves. The form only takes a few minutes to fill in which is also recommendable because, at the end of the demo, many visitors want to go home and are not keen to spend time answering questions.

Demo organisers may also attempt to 'professionalise' M&E by engaging a research organisation or an agricultural college. The latter has the additional advantage that it would provide a learning experience for students carrying out the M&E, which could be an additional objective of a demonstration.

Monitoring and evaluation is important to add reflexivity to the process of organising a demonstration and clearly helps the organisers to learn in a more structured way on how to best do this. Our cases show that this can have substantial benefits for the organisers while collecting and processing this information only takes little time. It is therefore not only a way to measure success of a demo but it can also be used as a means of improving its success.

Examples of strengths and weaknesses, tips and tricks from PLAID case Studies

M&E can give good insight into the motivations of farmers to visit a demonstration. On the Swiss organic cattle day, for instance, the graph below was produced on the basis of a brief exit interview with the demonstration participants.



This type of information can be very useful to demonstration organisers to plan the next version of a demonstration.

In the UK integrated farm management demo, M&E was used to assess to what extent visitors were satisfied about the level of detail that was provided at the various demonstration activities. This information will be used by the organisers to tune the next demonstration better to the needs of the visiting farmers.

It was striking that in most of the demonstrations visitors answered that the networking aspect (being able to meet and talk to other farmers and demonstrators) was one of the most important, if not the most important aspect of a demonstration. They often indicated that they would prefer to have more room for this.

For recurrent demonstrations is it useful to ask whether visitors have visited an earlier demonstration and whether they intend to follow the next demo. This was for instance done in connection with the Dutch leek day and the Polish potato day. The answers to these questions give an indication of how useful the demonstration was for the visitors.

In various demonstrations, visitors were asked what they found the most interesting aspect or topic of the demonstration, e.g. at the Dutch leek day, the Latvian animal husbandry demonstration, the Scottish monitor farm demonstration. The answers to this question tended to vary substantially across visitors. This is an indication that, when targeting a broader range of visitors, it is important to also offer a variety of demonstration topics to make it interesting for a large group of visitors.

In many of the case studies, visitors indicated that they appreciated a combination of talks that provided a little bit of theory and background with very practical demonstrations in the field. This was the case, for instance, at the Belgian potato demonstration, the French platform for innovative crop systems and at the Norwegian demonstration on optimal soil culture.

The outcome of an evaluation will not always be friendly to the organisation. For instance, in the Spanish demo on organic cow cheese production, visitors were asked to fill in an online survey after the demonstration. They could indicate which part they found most interesting (which is an indication of their information needs) but a substantial number also indicated that they found nothing interesting for their own farm. This clearly gives the organisers something to reflect about for their next demonstration.

In several demonstrations a 'focus group' was organised with demonstration visitors directly after the demonstration (e.g. the Spanish extensive crop trials visit) or some weeks later (e.g. the Latvian integrated fruit production demo, the Dutch maize demonstration). Such a focus group (that can be seen as a collective interview) provides much more detailed insight into the needs and ideas of the visiting



Mediation: Methods to enhance knowledge exchange

PLAID D5.3 Information Notes n° 4 – 15 June 2019

The Challenge: to help participants interpret the information provided

An important aspect of a demonstration is not only which information is provided but, how this information is provided to the visitors. This 'mediation' has a great influence on how well the visitors process the information provided, and how this helps them to assess what may be useful to them. This requires an interaction, between demonstrators and visitors and among visitors.

*Farmers need to make new knowledge 'their own', relate it to their own situation on their own farm - adapting before adopting. This requires not just 'providing objective information' but interacting with farmers and advisors to connect the information provided to their motivations and attitudes, to remove to barriers to adoption. This requires the use of facilitation skills and methods to **make the demonstration interactive**.*

That is the role of mediation.

PLAID lessons: Good practices to facilitate interactions

- **Organise smaller groups** (up to 15 people) which work better to achieve interaction between visitors. For field walks, this can be moderated by a guide who can explain or describe what is observed and who stimulates a discussion on these observations. If a speaker does not have any facilitation skills, it is advisable that a separate **facilitator** moderates the discussion.
 - **Stimulate interaction** by asking each demonstrator to propose discussions based on their presentation and/or provide facilitators to do this.
 - **Use** different presentation and interactive tools at different places and times of your demo event: indoors and outdoors; with different type of demonstrators or facilitators; practical and theoretical; with visual supports or material; with the possibility to touch and do hands on activities, where feasible; allow and facilitate peer to peer discussion.
 - **Train the demonstrators about facilitation** methods they will be useful.
- Make the key message** clear, limit the number of key messages as people can only process a limited amount of new information. Repeat *the key messages* to make the new knowledge 'stick'.

- Give visitors **materials to take home** to encourage them to review the key messages.
- **Failed examples** are a good way to stimulate learning and also help to raise the credibility of the presenter.
- Being able to **conduct business** at the demonstration is also a way to make the messages stick. This can take the form of directly buying or ordering products or establishing new relations with businesses to follow-up later.
- **Networking** between visitors and with demonstrators is important to stimulate reflection and to make messages stick. Provide **'open space' in the programme** to facilitate such networking and self-reflection.

Examples of strengths and weaknesses, tips and tricks from PLAID case Studies:

- The presence of several members (male and female) of the host farm to encourage engagement of the participants (Latvia)
- Organisation of the visitors in small peer groups (2-4 people in Latvia, about 10 people in Belgium) to enhance learning and sharing of experiences
- Posters, with field diagrams, figures, comparator photographs, etc., made specifically for demo events and presented during the field visit as well as “mobile” supports such as flyers with templates and figures (France, GB)
- Workshops organized indoor and directly on the field, with the possibility for the visitors to choose the workshops they want to participate in and organisation of exchanges and discussions (France, GB ...)
- The whole demo event in the field with no posters or lectures. Facilitators played the main role in demonstration (Italy). Presence of a “group facilitator” that follows the group with the objective to facilitate exchanges and interactions, to ask questions to participants (The Netherlands)
- Short interactive and practical lecture provided conjunctly by the visiting expert and the local advisers, with visual supports. Open questions during the lectures, with specific time, at several occasions to interact, and for the farmers to express their own practices on their farms (France, Italy, Switzerland). Informal exchanges before and after them (Norway, Belgium).
- Use of the leeks by seed suppliers as communication material; they arranged them in an attractive way and let the product speak for itself (The Netherlands)
- Informal moments (coffee, lunch) to stimulate exchanges
- Organisation of a small quiz during lunch time, with small prizes for the winners (Latvia), or interactive voting systems through a platform accessible from the participants smartphones during the demo (Belgium, Italy, Switzerland)





Demonstration:

A way to make novelties “your own”

PLAID D5.3 Information Notes n° 5 – 15 June 2019

The Challenge: to make the demonstrations adapted to each individual

*An important aspect of a demonstration is not only what novelty is presented but how information is provided to the visitors. Demonstrations give farmer the opportunity to **see innovations in practice** and experience these ‘hands-on’. Demonstration activities help participant to assess to what extent a new practice, tool, material ... may be useful to them and at which conditions. Demonstrations are particularly effective if participants can see and hear what is demonstrated and if there are interactions between demonstrators and participants, and between participants. Farmers need to make new knowledge ‘their own’, i.e. relate it to their own situation on their own farm. This requires not only ‘showing and demonstrating’ but also to facilitate observation, listening and interaction.*

That is the role of an efficient and interactive demonstration.

PLAID lessons: Good practices of demonstration

- **Organise practical demonstration** gives the opportunity to show how novelties work in practice. Number of attendants, noise and weather may make it difficult to communicate. It is essential to find different ways to explain what is being demonstrated:
 - Ensure good audibility and visibility;
 - Address possible drawbacks and propose relevant answers;
 - Interact with visitors on what is demonstrated and how it can be implemented in participants’ farms.
- **Propose hands-on activities** give participants a real-life experience. The objective is to allow them to touch, test, practice and comment novelties which are demonstrated, or their potential effects. This kind of activities requires:
 - limited group size (5-10 people)
 - a high level of preparation to build very practical activities
 - a high number of demonstrators/facilitators to be able to handle small groups
 - well facilitated interactions with visitors on what is done and what is experienced
- **Show and discuss also failures** where the practice was difficult to implement, the material didn’t work properly ... which serve as important objects for mutual learning and for delimiting the area of relevance of the proposed novelty.
- **Facilitate informal peer to peer discussions:** ‘benchmarking’ ideas with peers increases visitors’ self-confidence and allows them to discuss the potentials barriers to adopting a new approach. These exchanges can take place beyond influence of demo organisers and can be carried out without moderation, in order to improve the quality of exchange. The role of the organisers is therefore to provide ‘free space and free time’ in the demo program to allow self-reflection.

Examples of strengths and weaknesses, tips and tricks from PLAID case studies:

- Demonstrations are often carried out in small groups or workshops, in the fields or the barns, after a first part of the demo day including a lecture or an interactive presentation. A narrative by the demonstrator can usefully be accompanied by a practical **demonstration** or visual observation of an object that is made available for public display. The participation of the host farmer gives more strengths to the demonstration. (Latvia, United Kingdom, Italy, France).
- The Field Event can involve a tour of the estate and organised farm stops where speakers demonstrate and present a specific subject around the farm stop topic. The aim for each of the farm stops is to generate knowledge exchange and encourage discussion between the group, sharing their experiences, answering and asking questions, rather than just presenting an innovation or approach to them (United Kingdom, France).
- The participants can be asked to be active during the whole event: enter the “holes”, touch, smell and taste the soil and compare their impressions. They can do their own diagnosis of the soil status and propose managing solutions that were discussed with the host farmer, advisers and the other participants (Italy).
- The expert can first talk about a health card for soil, and handed out a written mapping tool so the participants could do the mapping work in their own fields as well. Then the expert specifically demonstrates how to conduct these soil samples, and gives the opportunity for participants to learn how to study the quality of the soil, by for instance looking at the texture, counting earthworms, and smell the condition of the soil. (Norway)
- During the demo, participants (students in this case) can be able to try handling seedlings and plants by hands, to smell some specific seedlings for recognition, to handle machinery (Croatia).
- When the hosts are present along the field walk they can draw attention to different items in their respective area of responsibility and can bring the group to spots where some damage or failures could be observed (e.g. poles that did not manage to hold up apple trees in the recent strong wind), which serves as an important object for mutual learning (Latvia).
- It is helpful if farmers can show both the front yard and the backyard of the farm without eliminating the traces of any failures faced in their farming experience. It represents an important factor for demonstrating real-life conditions and for encouraging the process of **peer-to-peer learning**. This can trigger a mutual exchange of experiences in dealing with similar problems on one’s own farm. According to the participants in the demonstration events, it is very important, and it is crucial for farmers involved in the demonstration to speak out about the problems and mistakes they face. Sharing, including negative experiences, is also important for effective peer education. (Bulgaria, Latvia)
- Most of the demo can be speaker frontal presentation, but with numerous examples and experiences from seedling and vegetable production. Speaker demonstrated not only good experiences, but also some mistakes from the past and learned “how not to” do some things. Speaker also encouraged students to ask questions, so communication was not only one way direction but in reciprocity. Students were able to try handling with a planting machine, planting seedlings, glasshouse maintenance and vegetable handling (Croatia).





Connecting People in Demo Events: Provide space to foster diverse forms of exchange

PLAID D5.3 Information Notes n° 6 – 15 June 2019

The Challenge: to make on-farm demonstrations interactive

Interactions between the host and visiting farmers, between visiting farmers, between farmers and advisors or scientists and also between the different demonstrators are essential for knowledge exchange and for the effectiveness of demonstration activities.

Providing opportunities to foster these exchanges presents a large challenge for the organisers.

Items to be considered are: ensure there is sufficient time and space and freedom for these exchanges, as well as the facilitation method.

PLAID lessons: Good practices to connect people

One of the PLAID project objectives was to look further at the exchanges that occur between the multi-actor groups that interact at on-farm demonstration. These exchanges, which occur between visiting and hosting farmers, are of key importance at on-farm demonstrations. This was corroborated by the observations made, but also stressed the importance of other types of exchanges.

- **Space and free time to allow diverse forms of peer to peer learning between farmers is welcomed:**
 - Between demonstrating farmers and the visiting farmers: Demonstrations by farmers is often smoother, and more convincing;
 - Between the visitors of a demonstration: to allow them to benchmark their own ideas with those of their peers, to place the demonstrated innovation in her/his own context;
 - Between the visitors and their neighbours, after the demo, on what they learned at the demonstration.
- **Providing physical space for other kinds of exchanges is advantageous:** Visiting farmers at demonstrations also learn a lot from other types of presenters (e.g. researchers, commercial actors), i.e. 'farmer-to-expert' exchange. Good moderation is essential to facilitate this kind of exchange. Hence, a farmer may learn more from a well-moderated expert presentation than from a poorly moderated farmer presentation.
- Exchanges between farmers and commercial companies can also be rich and useful if the demo event is co-organised between neutral actors and different commercial selling companies and if there is a good agreement on the main messages between all the organisers. Commercial companies should not solely co-organise or attend the demonstration to make a sales pitch, but should be encouraged to contribute in terms of knowledge and information exchange. Involving more than one company and involving 'neutral' parties like non-commercial advisory services or researchers can contribute to the credibility of the demonstration event and thus the wider use of the demonstrated novelties. Having an experienced neutral facilitator in cases

where there are these diverging interests can also be a good way to increase the credibility for the audience.

Examples of strengths and weaknesses, tips and tricks from PLAID case Studies:

- The visiting farmers appreciate the opportunity to get to know advisors of companies that can be source of knowledge and advice to them (Belgium).
- Demo event can be an ideal place for networking and interacting between participants. This can be the case during lunch break, between the sessions or also during sessions. The event should be designed in a way to provide a lot of space for interaction and networking among all kind of stakeholders, to allow participants complete flexibility (Switzerland, Bulgaria).
- Demo event can allow advisors to link with researchers and with experts of commercial companies and to invite them to participate on other demonstrations on this field (Bulgaria, Croatia).
- The time used for moving from one workshop to another may allow for moments of individual exchanges between visitors. It was observed that the change of the spatial arrangement (moving from the farm to the premises for group discussion) allowed for some group rearrangement with female participants approaching the host farmer with some questions that had emerged during the field walk (Latvia).
- The informal atmosphere (including humour in mutual communication) can also enhance learning among peers by encouraging micro interactions between both the host and the visiting farmers and amongst the visiting farmers themselves.
- The possibility to have a more comprehensive view of multiple practices linked to overall farm management seemed to be a rational way of doing the informal demonstration process on the farm. The lack of a predefined focus allows for spontaneous observations and ad hoc discussions of different practical issues as these appear and are seen as interesting, puzzling, and inspiring by the visitors along the route of the farm walk.
- The informal set-up of the demonstration activities works well, in some cases also because of the lower attendance: the smaller groups allow a lot of interaction between the hosting farmer, the visitors, the advisor, the installer, the (local) policy makers, ... (Belgium).
- In small groups, the demonstration atmosphere can be both serious and friendly. This aspect is fundamental for small groups of farmers (Spain).

