

Group 1 final statement 18 September 2009

Extension science and what is extension? Broadening the scope

Extension science is a collection of many other disciplines and is an evolving scholarly assessment of impacts of systems, approaches, and methods.

People understand agricultural extension as a process but not as a scientific discipline. How can we make it a scientific discipline?

The concept of extension needs to be broadened to include relevant rural aspects and to put the well-being at the heart of our goals. It should be rural not agricultural extension.

In light of global changes (economic, social, environmental, etc.), all extension systems should be adapting and finding correct institutional arrangements to face the present and future local and global challenges.

Ruttan thought extension would incorporate a discipline integrating rural, environmental, and health.

We need a marriage between extension and agricultural innovation systems, which is very theoretical still and this is where the money will be going.

Policy

It is not enough to show innovation processes or approaches to extension. The only gap in the seminar is how to implement into policy making areas. There should be a priority at the local level, then regional level, then perhaps the national and ultra-national level.

Extension should be a support to make good decisions. We are influenced by but not able to influence policy. We are bad at public and policy relations.

Policymakers have challenges to solve: that is the public good. These challenges include biodiversity, water management, bio-energy, climate change, and innovation, food security and poverty reduction. How far can extension contribute to all these challenges?

Networking

We need a center of excellence to bring information on extension together, to see what works well, etc. Different donors are pushing different approaches and there is no place for synthesizing. We need an international extension network; this can be used by education and policymakers as well.

We don't have enough exchanges on how to use knowledge to support growth with other disciplines, or even within our own discipline.

Promoting, advocating for extension

The "moment of truth:" when the advisor meets the farmer- what decides if that is successful or not?

Little is known about the advisors, who they are, what competencies they have, etc.

How to prove extension has made a difference? It has been proved. 63% returns (IFPRI)
People need to know what works where in extension, including private systems, to implement programs and policies.