Blurring the lines -- from research to outreach and back again

Daniel M. Weary, Animal Welfare Program, University of British Columbia

Blurring the lines...
Blurring the lines...
The UBC story

Engagement

Outreach

Dairy Lameness e.g.

Use of GM animals in research e.g.
Engagement: Formal links with stakeholders

Funding partners

- Importance of ‘buy in’

- Helps to identify issues and creates an interested audience for results

- Serve on Advisory Committees; help with two-way flow of information
Engagement: informal links with stakeholders

Create “coffee room” opportunities
Engagement: informal links with stakeholders

Create “coffee room” opportunities

Embedded research
Outreach

Step 1: Publication in peer-reviewed scholarly journals. This provides a time-honored method of quality control on any messages that go back to end users.
Outreach

Step 2: Outreach to information multipliers - veterinarians, extension agents, nutritionists and other industry professionals

E.g.:
• 2 books
• 24 book chapters
• > 1 million miles
• > 150 presentations
Outreach

Step 3: Outreach to end users

E.g.:

- UBC Dairy Research Reports
- Hoards Dairyman
- Progressive Dairyman
- Coffee, coffee, coffee..
E.g. Dairy lameness
Benchmark

British Columbia: 1,942 cows from 42 farms

Ito et al., 2009
Create teachable moments…

Untrained - 8% lameness

Espejo et al., 2006
Create teachable moments…
Create teachable moments...

Untrained - 8% lameness

Trained - 24% lameness

Espejo et al., 2006
Report back -- to policy makers

% of severely lame cows

Farm

10% cutoff

Ito et al., 2009
Reporting back -- to individual farmers

Percentage of cows with HEALTHY hock (% of cows in the pen assessed)

Better: 100
Average: 80
Worse: 58

Percentage: 34
(%)
Farmer H’s story…

Percentage of cows scored SOUND

Better | Average | Worse
--- | --- | ---
96 | 83 | 71 | 29 (%)

Percentage of cows scored SEVERELY LAME

Better | Average | Worse
--- | --- | ---
3 | 6 | 9 | 26 (%)
Apply the science - housing & lameness

Bernardi et al., 2009
Farmer H’s story…

- Work with end users to implement their solutions
- Document the effects of any intervention
- Use case studies to:
  - understand the generality of effects
  - motivate other users
A pretty picture, but..
Public engagement
E.g. Use of animals in research

- Non-GM
- GM
- Overall

Ormandy et al. 2009
Web survey design

Participants randomly assigned to the number of animals required (10, 100 or 1000 pigs)

Scenario develops to require the use of GM

www.yourviews.ubc.ca
Web survey results

"Would you support the use of...

... X pigs for research to reduce phosphorus pollution from pig farms?"

... X pigs for research to reduce phosphorus pollution by feeding the pigs genetically modified corn?"

... X pigs to develop a genetically modified pig to reduce phosphorus pollution from pig farms?"

Where $X = 10, 100$ or $1000$
Web survey conclusions

• Controlled experiment on public views
• Evaluate consistency across demographics
• Powerful tool for public engagement and education
Take home message:

Animal welfare science is most effective when integrated with end users: the public, policy makers, farmers and others responsible for animal care.

Research questions emerge from discussions with stakeholders. Results can be used by stakeholders to create solutions that fit their needs.

Research becomes part of an on-going process of helping stakeholders identify and solve problems in animal welfare.

Thanks!