Reflection on communication with beekeepers

B-RAP workshops, COLOSS eConference
Workshop 1: 21. September 2020
Workshop 2: 5. October 2020

Chaired by: Lotta Fabricius Kristiansen, Linde Morawetz
How do you feel about disseminating to beekeepers?

- present frequently
- present seldom
- don’t like it at all
- like it very much

Workshop 1
Workshop 2
Do you check if beekeepers got your message?

- no, never
- yes, always
How do you check if beekeepers got your message? - Part 1

By conversation

- I ask the beekeepers directly
- With close discussion with the beekeepers
- Direct conversation with beekeepers, but not “formally”.
- Normally in conversation with the beekeepers, for evaluation are mostly not enough time
- I talk with the beekeeper
  - Talking and discussing with the beekeepers
  - Feedback in meetings
  - I usually check by open Question and discussion session after the talk
  - If at a conference, level of engagement and types of questions.
  - I use to directly talk with them and also to email, call by phone.

Workshop 1  Workshop 2
How do you check if beekeepers got your message? - Part 2

### By tests and surveys
- Follow up surveys for larger events. Email for smaller events.
- Sometimes written evaluation.
- I make survey after my talk in every beekeeper meeting and ask what I mentioned.
- Only if using Mailchimp or other with analytics.
- E.g. By asking some questions before the course and the same questions after. By tests.
- Pre- and post-event survey.

### Other methods
- Annual management practices survey.
- If posted online, likes/shares/comments. Other feedback: emails, conversations, and actions.
- Not exactly “checking”, but sending reminders and such.
- I don’t and when only by chance.

*Workshop 1  Workshop 2*
**Practical demonstrations**

- Show things in a practical way. Bring some equipment as a “conversation piece”
- Refer to the mistakes I myself as a beekeeper have made

- Demonstration yard
- Show it practical
- Show it practical ;-) 

**Combine theory and practical topics**

- Make the talk entertaining, simple easy to understand. Practical, maybe even without powerpoint

- Combing theory with practical demonstration & training
- Give them not only a receipt, but give them more background
- You have to show that your advises/results came from field trials. Beekeepers are much more concerned
Your best tricks for reaching the beekeepers - Part 2

**Build a relationship of trust**

- Demonstrate to the beekeepers that you are a beekeeper yourself and not just a “scientist”...

- Try to understand their needs

- Think and behave like them and explain scientific information in a very simple way. And also I show them I know what they do with bees:) their secrets:

- If you are a beekeeper yourself, I think you get more respect and they will more easily listen to you.

- Establish a “relationship”: offer yard visits and information delivery in the field - use lots of pictures in a presentation

- I always try to take the beekeepers seriously - they also know a lot about bees. If scientific results are presented too simple, they think they are considered stupid

- Take part in beekeeping seminars

- Person to person is usually best, over a cup of coffee, giving them time+attention, kind of getting into their “territory”, somehow becoming “buddies” with them

- It depends on the topic: usually sharing time to answer their questions and doubts, but sometimes it is necessary to ask the help of a beekeeper technician that has complete trust in the beekeepers.

- In person meeting
Different ways to reach out and communicate

It is not my trick, but I observe from others, that being provocative is always giving attention.

Social media

Social media depends on how you’re reaching them (conference, social media, in conversation directly) as well as what the message is. My favorite method is an in-person event, e.g., conference, workshop, school. If trying to reach the masses, contact beekeeping associations and ask them to send emails to members. Whatever the medium, KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE and craft your message accordingly.

In Brazil, we give workshops and courses in beekeeper meetings. There is also a beekeeping magazine printed and online.
In the USA apiary inspector are extensionists.

if I need feedback, I use social media, if I have speach, use only pictures and videosequences.
## Your worst fails in beekeeper communication – Part 1

### Communication problems
- No translation from scientific language to beekeepers language
- Presenting too much numbers without connection to "real" beekeeping.
- Very long speeches
- Give talks with far too most new information
- Using only scientific language
- Being too technical/scientific.

### Adjusting to the audience
- Stay not at the same level
- Too difficult language
- Miscommunications when working with teams. Failure to follow up in a timely manner.
- "I am the Chief and You must follow me", means no explanation, only guidelines
- Worst that could happen is a “no communication”. Fortunately does not happen with beekeepers (at least those that come to courses)

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<th>Workshop 1</th>
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**COLOSS eConference October 2020**

**B-RAP workshops 1 and 2**
Problems with trust, credibility

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Being unprepared</th>
<th>I have 2: One is I am woman and it is very difficult to convince beekeepers who are mostly man. Second is I am a scientist at the university so they think that I get my salary in every conditions so bees are not crucial for my life. I cant understand them</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>try to make science too simple</td>
<td>worst fails: If beekeepers see that I am not experienced in specific topic</td>
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<td>the older don't easily accept new ideas</td>
<td>To strongly defend myself when things I say are being questioned. To engage in discussions I should know from the beginning lead nowhere</td>
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<td>Being a young, female scientist talking about beekeeping - some people don’t believe I know what I talk about.</td>
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<td>Scientist and or advisers do contradict each other</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Be honest and admit when there is something you do not know.</td>
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Not paying enough attention to their opinions. BUT also, letting them “decide/contribute” too much sometimes, so much that they ignore your input (e.g., “I’ve been a beekeeper for 40 years, I know best” kind of thing)

Sending an email with too much information and a specific request without first contacting the person to ask if they would mind. Another fail: not being fluent in the language and possibly looking unprofessional with bad grammar.

Time to devote to them.
Wishlist - what would improve the communication? Part 1

Contact with beekeepers

- Close collaboration with local beekeepers that have a good reputation/are well liked by the beekeepers in the area. Tools on how to establish such groups of local advisers and to maintain them.

- Well established beekeeping clubs with regular participants to talk to & which are open for new knowledge and practices. Practical workshops/demonstrations especially for beginners.

- To have much more time for questions of the beekeepers and for discussion with them.

- Involving them in our investigations.

- Wish to take small beekeepers groups into my lab and expect them to do experiment in order to be understood our position by them:))

- Probably more regular contact with the beekeepers, so that they know who you are and you who they are - but tricky with other work duties...

- Two days meetings with informal discussion in evening, beer helps...
### Ways of communication, teaching

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<td>Getting more creative social media and such to reach to younger generations</td>
<td>pathway of the communication e.g. website; + improve of the range</td>
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<tr>
<td>We should produce more and better videos and podcasts</td>
<td>Use media to their best advantage: social media, in-person presentations, videos, podcasts, etc. More imagery than text; in general people don’t read these days.</td>
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<td>Open access platform where everyone can contribute to generate graphs, resources, templates and material for presentations and communication under public domain.</td>
<td>wish to show them microorganisms inside their hives</td>
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<td>an easy and portable method to demonstrate inspection and sampling of living hives</td>
<td>communication platform amongst us in the B-Rap group</td>
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Wishlist - what would improve the communication? Part 3

**Better training for scientists, advisors**

Coloss invite experts that can educate us in different issues. Like make the perfect beekeeper talk or write the perfect article to beekeeper magazines.

Training for scientists to communicate better with non-scientists.

Better prioritization of what information to disseminate. When barraging people with too much information, they tend to tune out.

**A united beekeeping community**

More unity within the beekeeping world: instead of people focused on differences that divide us, let’s focus on what unites us, i.e., common love for honey bees.

More sharing of knowledge at each and every level. We suffer often the “teacher” illness from the scientists that has no ears to listen from the other stakeholders.

Standard practices and definitions that are common across the industry. We have a lot of local vocabulary for beekeeping terminology that can be confusing.
Thank you!

to all workshop participants for sharing their experience, knowlegde and ideas

Workshop 1: ~25 participants
Workshop 2: ~15 participants