

# Exploring approaches to strategic and effective communication for profitable and sustainable farming with Conservation Agriculture



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Conservation Agriculture (CA) provides many answers to the world's food and agriculture production and environment issues. While the uptake of CA in the Americas and Australia has been remarkable, in Africa, Asia and Europe uptake needs to be accelerated through greater policy and institutional support. The question is how?

#### Communication as framework for action

CA stresses the importance of system thinking but why should this philosophy stop at the farm gate? It should be communicated to all three groups of interconnected stakeholders -- farmers, institutions and policymakers.

A simultaneous, three-layered approach focusing on the farmer at the grassroots, on the institutional level and also on policy and governance can cut through at all levels, to reveal how CA represents a food system to which all global stakeholders can subscribe for a sustainable future.

### **Farmers**



- CA is a farmer-led practice
- Peer-to-peer messaging tools overcome the credibility barrier
- Farmers are willing to embrace change when they can analyse risk and assess what is involved
  - "In general, scientific research on CA lags behind farmers' own discoveries" (Kassam et al)1

Storytelling is
highly suited to CA
experience which relies on
innovation and
experimentation at the
farmer level for its
remarkable
successes

It is important to understand the different types of communication used horizontally within levels and vertically between them which often accentuate the difference between knowledge as information and the more dialogic 'know-how' found at the grassroots











## Institutions

- Knowledge needs to flow in all directions and institutions are at the intersection of information traffic
- Institutions, where improved systems are theorised and farmer experiences categorised, have a crucial role to play in convincing the grassroots and policymakers that CA works in everyone's best interests
- Stories from the field provide talking points at conferences, have media impact and influence policy advisors

#### **Policymakers**

- CA calls for a transformation in mindset for policymakers grown accustomed to more conventional approaches of agriculture based on tillage and purchased inputs.
- To make informed decisions policymakers need to hear the voices of practitioners
- Providing evidence of impact is key for decision making



## The opportunity

Thinking about how to communicate CA is an opportunity to provide a framew roles in developing a food and agriculture system to which all global stakeholdc...

<sup>1</sup>Amir Kassam, Theodor Friedrich, Francis Shaxson, Herbert Bartz, Ivo Mello, Josef Kienzle and Jules Pressupport for adoption and uptake », Field Actions Science Reports [Online], Vol. 7 | 2014, p.2. URL: http://

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Sustainable Farming
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Online Congress Bern, Switzerland June 21st-23th, 2021

