

Positive practice change through Participatory Action Learning

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What is the importance of learning?

- Farming systems and their practices change ⇒ impact on weeds
- New and improved approaches to weed management are discovered
- New weed management issues arise
- Landowners and their experiences change
- Land managers need to be kept up to date with weed management issues and approaches



Typical avenues of learning



Lectures and presentations



On-line resources



Publications

Do these approaches promote practice change?

Is there a better way?

What is participatory action learning?

- An extension approach that relies on active participation from learners

- A mixture and balance of:

- Presentations

Theory

- Questioning

Interaction and sharing

- Demonstration

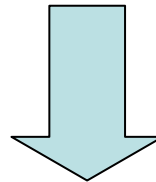
Visual learning

- Discussion

Personalising information

- Activities

Fun and memorable



PROMOTES PRACTICE CHANGE !!

Why does participatory action learning work?

- Provides tools for improved decision making

**“Give a man a fish and feed him for a day,
Teach a man to fish and feed him for life”**

- Suits a variety of different learning styles (reading, hearing, doing)
- Enables shared knowledge and experiences
- Enjoyable and interactive – participants remember the experience and the content

Our experience with participatory action learning

Background

- Herbicide resistance in annual weeds of cropping systems in the northern grain region – an increasing problem
- Herbicide resistance can cost farmers time, resources and \$\$
- Many misconceptions about herbicide resistance and how to best prevent / manage



Our experience with participatory action learning

Approach

- Clear aims identified
 - Participants (farmers) to have a clear understanding of herbicide resistance and integrated weed management
 - Participants can develop weed management plans to decrease risk of herbicide resistance and improve weed management
- Workshop framework developed and trial run of workshop with extension specialists
- Small groups (<15 participants)
- Full or ½ day workshops
- Each participant received a workshop manual – later reflection

Our experience with participatory action learning

Activities

- Baseball demonstration
 - Understanding herbicide resistance



Theory

Visual learning

Fun and memorable

Our experience with participatory action learning

Activities

- Bowling
 - Understanding integrated weed management
 - Selection pressure



Theory

Interaction and sharing

Visual learning

Personalising information

Fun and memorable

Our experience with participatory action learning

Activities

- Rotational planner
 - Application of learnt principles to personal situation



Interaction and sharing

Personalising information

Fun and memorable

Our experience with participatory action learning

Short-term outcomes

- 13 workshops with 131 participants
- Covered the major cropping areas of the northern grain region
- Effective transfer of principles
 - Participants were able to identify previously held misconceptions
- Workshops rated highly (4.4 out of 5)
- 84% of participants committed to making some change in their weed management practices

Our experience with participatory action learning

Long-term outcomes

Approximately 12 months after the workshop

- 82% of participants had made practice change as a result of the workshop
- Between 73 – 91% had overcome previously held misconceptions about herbicide resistance

Our experience with participatory action learning

The future

- *Adaptable*: The workshop is being adapted for cotton farming systems
- *New Approach*: Development of a trainers guide for extension specialists
- *Better Targeted*: On-line questionnaire to gather information about the group before the workshop

Other applications of participatory action learning

This type of learning can be applied to any area of weed management and with any target audience

- What do you want to achieve out of your teachings or learning's?
- Is this achieved with currently used methods?
- If not, participatory action learning may be for you.