



Tropentag, September 20-22, 2023, hybrid conference  
“Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation:  
Trade-offs and synergies”

## The best of two worlds? Problems and new approaches of science communication with practitioners in sustainable agriculture

ARIANE GOETZ, MARTINA PADMANABHAN

*Passau University, Chair of Critical Development Studies, Germany*

### Abstract

Science communication is essential for the implementation of agricultural and environmental sustainability goals in agriculture. The reference to practical knowledge, the capacities and needs of farmers and the local context are a prerequisite for providing practice-relevant knowledge and bringing sustainable agriculture into the mainstream. In reality, however, there are considerable problems of communication, relevance and legitimacy of science communication. On the one hand, perceptions of problems and solutions are often far apart between the farmer’s view and the researcher’s view. On the other hand, science itself is currently divided on what it takes to achieve sustainability goals in the sector. Furthermore, communication with practice is mostly neglected in the science system. Often it remains unclear whether, where and how science communication with practice takes place, and thus also to what extent what is communicated is useful in the respective context, and whether it is effective with respect to the goal level.

In a first step, this paper provides a systematic overview and categorisation of current problems of science communication with agricultural practice in view of knowledge exchange and sustainability. In a second step, the results of this synthesis effort serve as a basis for discussing current science communication attempts to overcome the mediation, relevance, and legitimacy problems through new content, formats, and processes. Several questions are at the centre of the investigation: what are predominant problems of science communication with practitioners? How are they addressed by means of current science-communicative innovations (in terms of content, format and process)? Which problems are being neglected? And to what extent can the innovations be expected to contribute to a better effectiveness of the exchange of experiences and the environmental and agricultural sustainability claim.

**Keywords:** Agricultural transformation, science communication, knowledge politics, knowledge systems