



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search

<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>

aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

Paper 7. The Communication, Information and Marketing Strategy

C.Mulholland^A and G.R. Griffith^{AB}

^ACooperative Research Centre for Beef Genetic Technologies, Armidale NSW 2351

^BNSW Department of Primary Industries, Armidale NSW 2351

Abstract. Effective communication is one of the keys to achieving successful partnerships between beef business managers, technical specialists, businesses in value chains, CRC management and partner agencies. It is the responsibility of the BPP Communication, Information and Marketing Strategy to ensure all partners in the BPP network have access to the information and resources they need, can share information and experiences, can give and receive support, and have opportunities to provide feedback. In this paper the elements of the strategy are outlined.

Keywords: Communication; information; marketing.

Background

The rationale for developing the Communication, Information and Marketing Strategy was:

- that the BPP project is funded to contribute to raising the current low level of productivity growth and the associated economic impact of beef industry end-users based on the activities of the Beef CRC;
- that one of the key components for achieving a successful BPP project is effective communication among the partners; and
- that there is no available communication, information and marketing mechanism across all the various individual beef businesses, value chains and participating agencies to provide the knowledge and resources necessary to ensure success of the BPP project.

Applying the Underpinning Science

The literature review reported in Paper 2 highlights some key concepts that impact on the Communication, Information and Marketing strategy. These are:

- that setting well defined outcomes and targets can lead to higher levels of performance for both individuals and groups (see for example Klein and Mulvey 1995; Klein et al. 2001; Tovey 2001; Marlow 2005);
- that the creation of a results-oriented culture is essential for actual implementation of a results-oriented approach (Perrin 2002); and
- that when working in partnerships it is crucial to have a shared understanding of target outcomes and the key concepts associated with those outcomes (see for example Rounthwaite and Shell 1995;

Abel et al. 1998; Penna and Emerson 2003; Perrin 2006). Achieving a shared understanding of these concepts across the entire BPP network requires effective communication within and between teams and regional networks. This will result in considerable improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of achieving rewarding results, which in turn sustain motivation and build momentum.

Another theme highlighted in Paper 2 is that collaborative activities such as networks are an effective means of achieving increased improvement and innovation (Department of Industry, Science and Resources 2000). Networks are purposeful, value-adding partnerships based on reciprocal transactions between partners. They are oriented to a common purpose which is beyond the limited abilities of individual network members (Chisholm 1996; Gray and Wood 1991, Roussos and Fawcett 2000). That is, individuals and organisations come together to achieve common outcomes that none of them can achieve separately. Achieving effective partnerships and networks requires effective communication.

Finally, in "new generation" innovation (Rothwell 1994) and R&D (Miller and Morris 1999) models, effective innovation, adoption and diffusion are partly dependent on the sharing of knowledge gained through trials which involve all the people in the outcome-achievement chain, and take place in the research process itself; on developing the innovation capabilities of end-users, developers and researchers; on feedback and partnership as opposed to a linear R&D model; and on the fact that when an innovation reaches product development its value has already been proven to all stakeholders. Achieving an effective sharing of knowledge and an effective feedback and

support process requires effective communication.

Strategy Focus and Target Outcomes

Based on these considerations, the focus of the Communication, Information and Marketing Strategy is to increase the profile and performance of BPP teams across Australia and New Zealand through implementation of the Strategy to achieve a 15 per cent increase in BPP awareness across partners, participants and management each year, every year. This is measured by monitoring the use of the secure BPP website and by each Facilitator collecting this data during the course of a BPP meeting.

Flowing from this focus, the specific target outcomes of the strategy are that:

1. All partners in the BPP project understand the need, rationale and value of the Project;
2. There is an effective and responsive feedback and feed-forward mechanism to support BPPs and individual partners;
3. The BPP network and industry are well informed of the achievements and successes of BPPs and individual partners;
4. Facilitators and partners are well informed about achievements across the CRC network; and
5. The CRC management and the Board have confidence that the BPP project is meeting its objectives and contributing to the target outcomes of the Beef CRC.

Analysis of the Present Position in Relation to Communication, Information and Marketing

The BPP Management Team currently offers the following products and services to BPP partners and facilitators:

- A secure BPP website with background information, tools, PowerPoint presentations and updates;
- A support team including specialists in Economics, Continuous Improvement and Innovation, Graphics Design and Project Management;

- A range of publications including: an introduction to the BPPs; an A5 booklet for prospective partners; project overview PowerPoint presentations; a BPP logo; a full Resources Kit that includes a detailed explanation of the CI&I tools; and contact details for Facilitators; and
- Notes from Management Meetings for facilitators and partners.

To ensure all partners are committed to the Beef Profit Partnership network, a strong and comprehensive Communication, Information and Marketing Strategy is required. In the first instance, individual partners will require direct communication with their Beef Profit Partnership. This BPP will communicate with other regional BPPs within close proximity. These BPPs form part of a State network of BPPs. A State Co-ordinator has been appointed to ensure communication occurs between partners and facilitators within their state.

The State Co-ordinator is part of a network involving other State Co-ordinators and the BPP Management Team. The Management Team is responsible for ensuring the flow of information from the Beef CRC Management and the Board to the State Co-ordinators. This information flow is a two-way process with information flowing up the network as well as down (see Figure 7.1).

Planned Communication Strategies

Communication outputs will include:

- A regional newsletter for BPP partners produced by facilitators, will be distributed to their partners on a regular basis throughout the year. The contents of this newsletter will include achievements on a regional basis, events or meetings that are coming up, case studies and ideas from other industries, improvement tips and tools, and any other relevant information;
- A State newsletter for partners and facilitators produced by facilitators, will be distributed to Regional BPPs, individual partners and regional facilitators on a regular basis. The contents of this newsletter will include BPP activities on a state level, success stories from their state, events that may be of interest from not only their state, but also in other states and any other information;
- An "internal" staff newsletter for all facilitators across Australia and New

Zealand produced by the BPP Management Team. This newsletter will contain reports, hints and tips on various tools for facilitation, budget news, messages from the BPP Management Team, messages from the Beef CRC Management and information on reporting deadlines;

- A calendar (electronic and print) outlining the important dates and deadlines required by facilitators and the BPP Management Team, developed on an annual basis and regularly reviewed and updated;
- Reporting templates for facilitators and the Management Team, which will be used at all times. These templates will form the basis of all reporting required by Beef CRC Management;
- A Feedback form which will be available to all partners and participants and will allow members to suggest improvements or to offer constructive criticism. This form will be forwarded to the BPP Management Team for a review and appropriate action;
- PowerPoint presentations which will be made available to all members of the BPP network allowing them to use the most up-to-date information for any presentation they may have to give;
- As part of project continuous improvement and innovation, a Forum involving all BPPs from across Australia and New Zealand. This Forum may require the production of "conference proceedings". Articles in this publication could include the methodology of practices and changes that were implemented in a beef business as well as research updates from the BPP network;
- An Annual Report, which when will be developed that will contain the progress, achievements and successes of BPPs across Australia and New Zealand. The information contained in this publication will be forwarded to Beef CRC Management as part of the annual progress reports, usually compiled in March each year. Once this information has been forwarded to Beef CRC Management an Annual Report will be produced for all partners, facilitators, funding partners and potential new partners;
- Flyers and information booklets, which will be produced when required by either facilitators or partners;

- The use of text messaging to facilitators and partners. This method of communication will be used to inform people of upcoming events, reporting deadlines or encouraging them to visit the BPP secure website; and
- Continuing use of the secure website that has been established for the BPP network. Partners, facilitators and appropriate personnel are given access through a Member ID and Password. Information contained on the website includes the full resources kit, newsletters, Management Meeting updates, PowerPoint presentations, logos, photos and reports. The website is regularly reviewed and information is constantly uploaded. The website is the first point of contact for any member of the BPP seeking information.

Planned Information and Marketing Strategies

All the communication strategies above will be used to market the benefits and challenges of the BPPs as well as encourage new partners to participate in the process. A PowerPoint presentation and method for introducing the BPP concept to potential partners has been developed. This has been very successful with new BPPs being formed as a result of each presentation. Communication is kept open with prospective partners to ensure all questions and queries are answered. Once a formal BPP has been established, the care and responsibility of a partner is transferred to the BPP Facilitator, although the channels for feedback are always open.

Action Plan

An action plan for the Communication, Information and Marketing Strategy is detailed in Table 7.1.

Measuring, Monitoring and Evaluating

Measuring, monitoring and evaluation of the Communication, Information and Marketing Strategy will be conducted as part of each BPP meeting. It is good continuous improvement and innovation practice to score and rate the information at each BPP meeting. An example of this measuring is a question put to a BPP team in relation to the BPP newsletter:

Did you receive the BPP newsletter dated <date>? YES / NO
Did you find the information useful? Score 1 for not very useful; and 5 for very useful

Do you have any suggestions for improvement of this newsletter?

The overall monitoring, measuring and evaluation of this Strategy will take place annually.

Conclusion

An effective communication strategy is one of the keys to achieving a successful BPP partnership with beef businesses and value chains, CRC management and participant agencies. The responsibility of the Communication, Information and Marketing Strategy is to ensure all partners have sufficient knowledge about how the project is progressing and sufficient resources to ensure it continues to progress. The elements of that strategy have been outlined in this paper.

Appendix

Table 7.1. Action plan for the communication, information and marketing strategy

Activity	Date Due
• Regional Newsletter	When appropriate
• State Newsletter	When appropriate
• Internal Newsletter	Every 90 days, after the 90 day BPP Management meetings
• Calendar	For distribution each year in December
• Reporting Templates	These will be revised/updated when appropriate
• Feedback Form	These will be revised/updated when appropriate
• PowerPoint Presentations	These will be developed as required
• Conference Proceedings	These will be produced in conjunction with the BPP Forum
• Annual Report	April each year
• Flyers	When appropriate

Figure 7.1. The information flow through the BPP project

