KTT In A Digital Age: Is technology changing how we talk to farmers?

Introduction

The dairy industry is the most technologically advanced livestock sector within Ontario. With the change of technology there has been a need to adjust how we are communicating with dairy farmers in Ontario and, more generally, all producers. This review was done to examine the changes in KTT and see how it will change further as the world becomes more digital.

KTT Styles – Teaching the Farmer **Linear** – agriculture professionals relay information between the researchers and the producers who are implementing the research results.

Non-Linear – Agriculture professionals look at the interactions between producers (and their ideas) and the institutions that shape how producers and organizations function together, to meet the needs specific to a particular farming system and their environment.

As KTT have evolved to a non-linear system we have found the need to address many different **personality types**. There are several types of personalities to consider when working with producers: hard to reach, proactivists, do-it-yourselfers, and people who will choose to wait and see².

1845: Beginning of modern extension

1969: Introduction of home internet to Canada

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5 Keys to ensure good KTT in Ontario³:

- Consistent, organized and available information on progressive topics and based on research. Information should be able to teach agriculture professionals who can grow and expand on the knowledge to be more applicable to farmers A good method to distribute information Legislation or an official mandate to ensure KTT work is done (through government) A Variety of different avenues to distribute information and advice to producers

The End of the Gutenberg Era

Over the past several years KTT has started to shift towards a more digital format. Several KTT specialists were interviewed and all said they were slowly moving away from print and demo days to get information to producers.

The shift to digital is something that is happening across every sector due to decreased costs, saved time and get information across faster. Technology adaption rates among dairy farmers is slow⁴ and varies in relation to herd size. Smaller herds still rely on print documents and one on one communication, and larger herds are more willing to adapt to using digital formats⁵.

1970's: Shift to non=linear extension



With the new technology and its increased use worldwide, it is easy to move strictly to digital format. KTT workers need to find a balance between old and new. By using a variety of methods and adapting old methods of KTT, more producers can be reached. As we move toward a digital space, content should continue to be a valuable and trusted to the producer.

The shift to digital formats is going to require a significant investment in broadband internet access in rural Ontario, to ensure that the information is reaching the producers pocket.

- *Diary Science*, *93*, 1296-1306.
- Rome: United Nation.

2010's: Social Media, video conferencing and apps become popular

2000's: Popularization of smart phones

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Moving Forward

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> Future: Increased use of technology and digital media. Increased use of video for communication.