

The Capacities of Farmers to Cope Positively With Climate Change

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Abstract - In this presentation the objective is to discuss the capacities of farmers to cope positively and constructively with respect to climate change. The issue is not for researchers to tell the farmers what to do! But rather to help the farmers make their own decisions to deal with climate change and how this may affect their success. Where researchers are involved in discussions with farmers, this means that the researchers should undertake a Research Action approach. This means that the researchers can organize meetings with farmers but not tell them what to do. The discussions can focus on the opportunities for farmers to discuss the recent impacts of climate change on their agricultures and then discuss their futures. One possibility that has been real (in Québec) and initiated by farmers is that they could identify other territories in other countries or territories where 1) climate change had already had a significant impact on agriculture and 2) the farmers decided how they could cope with climate change and its effects by understanding the results achieved in these other territories.

A critical result was when the farmers (in the Québec territory) decided to travel to the USA and discuss with American farmers (in a similar territory to that of the Québec farmers) what they had done to cope with climate change. After these discussions, the Québec farmers returned home and undertook various discussions with other farmers. The results were exceptionally constructive and positive.

Dr. Bryant will then discuss the results undertaken by these Quebec farmers and how important their own roles had been. This was a very special situation in which a group of farmers decided that they should improve their own understanding of the effects of climate change on agriculture by discussing what had already happened in other agricultural territories (similar to theirs) in the past and learning from these experiences how some of these farmers had effectively determined what they might be able to achieve.