

ROLE OF INFORMAL DEMONSTRATIONS: FRUIT-GROWERS' COOPERATIVE



PLAID
PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING:
ACCESSING INNOVATION
THROUGH DEMONSTRATION





COUNTRY/REGION

LATVIA

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There are many ways for organising learning through agricultural demonstrations. Quite often these events are highly formalised, but they can also be efficiently organised on an informal basis. A case study in Latvia on annual mutual farm visits of cooperative members in fruit production represents a bottom-up initiative by primary producers to share knowledge and experiences on their farming practices. It is not mandatory to have a formally structured demonstration process with a strict set of pre-arranged methods. The major advantage of the observed peer-to-peer learning activities are the **real-farm management conditions and the readiness to also share farming failures. The presence of several members of the host farm encourages engagement of participants of both genders, different age groups**, etc., thereby increasing the likelihood of learning on a more diverse range of topics. Farmers' self-organisation into smaller peer groups (2-4 persons) strongly enhances learning and exchange of experiences. Peer-to-peer learning during farm visits consists of numerous small episodes of verbal and non-verbal interactions that are used to demonstrate and initially validate a new technical artefact or method. The established relationships between participants facilitate learning not only for the visiting farmers but also for the host. There is a strong complementarity of the closed activities of the group and demonstrations attended by its members as part of exhibitions, rural days, study visits. **Many novelties are borrowed from pioneering farms** outside the cooperative's own network. Regular and diverse learning activities enable knowledge flows and reinforce the farmer's decision to convert the first demonstration impulse into one's own practice.

ABOUT PLAID

The project has been designed to encourage farmers and farm employees to embrace innovations in agriculture by accessing high quality demonstration activities on commercial farms. Demonstration activities may also contribute to network building in agriculture communities, leading to longer term sustainability and economic development in rural areas. However little has been documented on agriculture demonstration activities in European countries and the lack of an inventory or on-line resources have been identified.

All practice abstracts developed by PLAID H2020 project are available in EPI-AGRI official website:
<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/peer-peer-learningaccessing-innovation-through>



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