

→ Terry Parminter



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Title: Integrated campaign to encourage rural behaviour change

Author: Terry Parminter

Affiliation: AgResearch
(AgResearch, New Zealand's largest Crown Research Institute)

Abstract:

The study by state agencies in 2000, addressed how to reduce dairy farm effluent contamination of waterways in the Australian state of Victoria.

Social marketing research using focus groups, personal interviews and a belief mapping survey brought together an understanding of the decisionmaking context, landowner motivation and their behavioural beliefs.

There are over 7000 dairy farmers in Victoria. Six segments were identified describing 90% of these farmers, based upon their farming goals and the fit of the desired behaviour to decisionmaking related to those goals. Initially, Australian government agencies (Department of Primary Industries and the Environmental Protection Agency) strategically concentrated upon the segments that were most accessible to them and that they could most assist through technical information.

Extension agencies used a range of mass media and individual advice to influence landowner behaviour in the segment containing 20% (1400) of the farmers. They did not use advertising and relied upon personal appeals and information. After three years an evaluation suggests that the campaign has directly influenced 1900 farmer participants to make changes.

Environmental behaviours are very specific to particular contexts. They generally do not provide tangible benefits to the individual decisionmakers who most often carry the costs. This project has shown the importance to policy design and implementation of understanding decision and social systems and combining qualitative and quantitative methods.