

Graduate Student Symposium: How to Communicate Science Successfully Using Media Outlets

566 Proper media preparation and how to successfully sell your science to the public. M. E. McCurry-Schmidt*, *American Society of Animal Science, Champaign, IL.*

The objective of this presentation is to teach graduate students the skills to effectively present animal science and agricultural issues to the media. Scientists and producers see misrepresentations of agricultural production in blog items, news articles and across social media. Misconceptions about animal production have led to non-science-based policy decisions at the state and federal levels. To effectively reach the public, animal scientists must be prepared to speak with the media. Scientists must translate their research into “lay” terms and prepare speaking points before giving interviews. Scientists can offer lab tours and multimedia resources to show how science affects the public. Scientists should also ask reporters questions to make sure their science will not be misrepresented. With the right preparation, scientists can serve as valuable resources for the media, the public and policy makers.

Key Words: media, communications, outreach

567 Communicate by better listening. R. F. Roberts*, *The Pennsylvania State University, University Park.*

Communication is about exchanging thoughts and ideas and involves the activities of both transmitting and receiving. A focus on your message allows you to tell your story, that is, to “transmit” effectively. But this is only half of the process. Listening, the “receiving” portion of communication is equally as important. Listening requires focus and energy. One of the most difficult parts of really listening is laying aside potential distractions; that is, the smartphone or the computer screen. Nothing tells someone you aren’t listening faster than a glance at the screen! Another common issues leading to a “failure to communicate”

occurs when both parties are trying to “transmit” at the same time. This occurs when we want to show how smart we are by having a ready answer to every question that is asked (or we think will be asked) or a quick question to prove we are engaged. The result of this behavior is that rather than listening to what is being said, we are in the process of formulating our response, or preparing our question. The end result of this is that we may end up “directing” the conversation down the path we want to go, rather than the path the “transmitter” intended. By focusing more on what is being said, we will foster much deeper communication. Techniques that can be used to enhance communication will be discussed during this presentation.

Key Words: listening, communication

568 Know your story and how to tell it. K. A. Devaney*, *Dairy Farmers of America, Mooresville, NC.*

The average American is 3 to 4 generations removed from the farm and less than 2 percent are involved in agriculture. As consumers become more interested in how their food is produced, the dairy industry needs to tell the story of sustainable and responsible dairy farming. Regardless of one’s role in the industry, everyone can be an effective dairy advocate. Participants will learn how to communicate science so that it is clear to any audience, how to speak with one voice as an industry, use various media interview techniques and several ways to reach out to the community on behalf of the dairy industry. Communicating research is extremely important but can be difficult with complex topics. These tips will take the mystery out of communicating clear, concise messages that will resonate with any audience.

Key Words: dairy advocate, communication