

AgroVet-Strickhof: Conference Abstract 2023

Title in english:

Communicating knowledge on grassland management using videos and online fact sheets

Titel in deutsch:

Wissen zur Graslandbewirtschaftung mittels Videos und Online-Merkblättern vermitteln

Authors and Affiliations:

Caren M. Pauler^{1,2}, Daniel Mettler³, Thomas Alföldi⁴, Helen Willems⁵, Cornel Werder⁵ and Manuel K. Schneider¹

¹ Agroscope, Zürich, Switzerland

² Swiss Grassland Society, Zürich, Switzerland

³ Agridea, Eschikon, Switzerland

⁴ Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Frick, Switzerland

⁵ Büro Alpe, Lätti, Switzerland

Abstract (in english, max. 500 words)

Digital information is of increasing interest to farmers and land managers. Scientists do a lot of research providing advice and solutions for farmers. However, these results are too often not accessible to non-scientists. A severe gap in knowledge transfer was identified for weed control on alpine summer pastures. These areas are under pressure of problematic plants reducing the forage quality and ecological value of the pastures. Therefore, careful pastures management and weed control is a precondition of direct payments to alpine summer farms in order to maintain biodiversity, openness and beauty. Due to its seasonal nature, work on alpine pastures is frequently carried out by external staff without formal training and advisory documents concerning pasture management and weed control are scattered in different formats and from different organisations. Therefore, we set up a project to synthesize existing knowledge and to make this information easily accessible through online fact sheets and educational videos.

The videos of around ten minutes duration always featured a farmer and an expert, presenting for about half of the time. Combining peer and expert teaching facilitates knowledge transfer to the heterogeneous community of alpine staff. For the production, we established a standardized procedure: Before creating videos and web content, we gathered all available knowledge and elaborated take-home messages. These were discussed in a group of experts (scientists and farm advisors) and together with farmers to elaborate a coherent and understandable scenario. Special emphasis was placed on adapting pasture management and mechanical intervention rather than the use of herbicides. The videos were subtitled in German, French, Italian and English, and released on YouTube. Alongside the video, detailed information was prepared for release on the website www.patura-alpina.ch. As for the videos, a standardized format was established. The primary sections were (A) occurrence and distribution of the problematic plant, (B) situation analysis, (C) regulation measures, (D) adjustment of management, (E) mechanical intervention and (F) chemical regulation. After consultation within the editorial team and with additional experts and practitioners, the information was published online.

The website was released in summer 2019 and is freely available in three languages (German, French and Italian). In 2023, it contained information about eight plant species groups, commonly perceived problematic on alpine pastures: alpine dockweed (*Rumex alpinus*), white helleborum (*Veratrum album*), rush (*Juncus effusus* and *Juncus inflexus*), alpine ragwort (*Senecio alpinum*), bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum* and *Dryopteris filix-mas*), dwarf shrubs (*Juniperus communis* and *Rhododendron hirsutum*), thistles (*Cirsium palustre* and *Cirsium arvense*) and green alder (*Alnus viridis*). Since the website was released, the videos were viewed nearly 30 000 times in total. Direct feedback received from farmers and farm advisors was very positive.

Communicating to farmers by means of video and web contents is a contemporary means of knowledge transfer. The standardized participatory procedure involving scientists, extension services and farmers, to produce educational videos and web contents has proven to be cost and time-efficient. We are convinced that communicating scientific knowledge in an easy-accessible and low-threshold way improves the adoption in agricultural practice.

Do the authors agree, that this conference abstract will be published in the conference proceedings at the "Research Collection" of ETH Zurich? **yes** **no**

The abstract will be published in the Book of Abstracts. This book will be made available to all participants and will be available for download on the homepage. Do you agree with this? **yes** **no**

Please submit this document until May 31th 2023 to andrea-weiss@ethz.ch.