

ISSUE 8

## Tips to help growers improve

At AgriHealth's April Poultry Gut Health Seminar veterinarian Steve Cranefield delivered a workshop to help attendees assist livestock teams improve flock health and productivity. Every livestock system can make improvements, it is a matter of the people involved having awareness, desire, knowledge, and ability, as well as reinforcing the results of positive changes (ADKAR model).



### Awareness

"It was working just fine before"

### Desire

"I'm not really interested in changing"

### Knowledge

"I don't know what I'm meant to do"

### Ability

"I don't know how to get started"

### Reinforcement

"I tried, but I'm going to keep doing the old way"

**A**

IF MISSING AWARENESS...

**DISCUSS THE REASON:** What is the nature of the change, why do I need to it now, what is the risk of not doing it?

**D**

IF MISSING DESIRE..

**ADDRESS INHERENT DESIRE TO CHANGE:** What's in it for me, what are my personal motivators, what are the collective motivators, how do I overcome my resistors?

**K**

IF MISSING KNOWLEDGE...

**DISCUSS THE REASON:** What do I need to know to start, what do I need to unlearn, where can I go for accurate information?

**A**

IF MISSING ABILITIES...

**SUPPORT THEM TO PRACTICE NEW SKILLS OR BEHAVIORS:** What specific behaviors do I need to demonstrate, what are my gaps, where can I get help to get better?

**R**

IF MISSING REINFORCEMENT...

**REINFORCE INCENTIVES OR CONSEQUENCES:** How will I stick with it, what measurements exist to let me know I'm doing, how will we celebrate success?



Fundamentally, it is essential to remember that everyone working with livestock (ourselves included) are individuals with different personalities, skills, beliefs and objectives. On top of that, human brains have evolved to find comfort in familiarity, certainty and control over our circumstances (human beings are truly creatures of habit). This means that we find behavioural change difficult, so there needs to be high motivation for this to occur.

It is well accepted that different personality types are more likely to be influenced by styles that align with their natural instincts. Hence, if we are seeking to change an individual's behaviour it is important to tailor our approach to the person we are dealing with to get the best result; some examples are given in the table below.

Personality	Descriptors	Influenced by
Driver	Results-oriented Wants to win Prepared to take calculated risks Impatient	Confidence Fast paced discussions (getting to the point) Focus on high points, new ideas Appealing to person's ego
Expressive	Unstructured Wants recognition Impulsive Outgoing	Openness and friendliness Appeal to personal benefits and recognition New ideas Not getting bogged down in details
Amiable	Agreeable Wants to be liked Values feedback Artistic	Politeness and reassuring Trust and assurances Time to digest facts and information
Analytical	Logical Want to be right Careful Formal	Data and facts e.g. benchmarking Answer questions Time for evaluation

Consideration and acknowledgement of an individual farmer's goals is crucial if an advisor is likely to influence them to make any management changes. It is also important that time is taken to make observations about the farming operation with discovery questions that exhibit curiosity about management and livestock, so that opportunities are unearthed by the farmer. Usually they are the best person to develop the framework for improvement (with the advisor then able to provide accountability and reinforcement against the farmer's action plan).



Workshop participants were invited to consider some on-farm scenarios and decide how best to work with a hypothetical grower to make positive impact on farm management. Example scenarios were poor drinker management leading to damp litter and high footpad dermatitis at plant, and poor brooder management (not preheating floor and insufficient feed available).

Initially the grower's personality was identified so that they were approached in such a way as to have the most likelihood of influencing change. Secondly, consideration was given as to where the grower is on the ADKAR model, in relation to the proposed change. Generally when an item has recently arisen for a grower they are still grappling with awareness or desire to change. These can be overcome by providing benchmarking, telling stories or outlining the science – with the best approach often dependant on the person you are dealing with. Considering prompts to keep people moving towards behavioural change can also be helpful, especially when delivered at a time when the person is both motivated and able to take action. Effective prompts are connected to the farmer's goals and grab their attention. Finally, remembering to always follow-up to provide reinforcement of actions taken. Sometimes this can also open up new opportunities for improvement.

In summary, there is more to being an effective influencer of behaviour than correctly identifying issues or shortcomings. People will only change their behaviour if their motivation to do so is sufficiently high. In addition, their actions need to align with their goals. Unearthing what makes a person "tick" by asking questions, staying curious, and really listening to understand, is the essential first step to developing a trusted advisor relationship. This is the best place to start to help make a positive impact on farm management.

Please contact: [paul@agrihealth.co.nz](mailto:paul@agrihealth.co.nz) for more information

