



An Investigation of Wheat Producers Perceived Source Credibility

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Introduction

- Wheat producers face continuous pressure to adopt conservation practices (Feldman & Ingram, 2009; Vocke & Ali, 2013).
- Producers often seek information from sources with whom they have developed interpersonal, trusted relationships (Moody, 2018; Phiri et al., 2019; Ranjan et al., 2019).

Theoretical Framework

- Some of the earliest scholarship on credibility defined it as expertise, trustworthiness, and goodwill.
- We used Hunt and Wald's (2020) four components of source credibility (understanding, integrity, concern, and trust) and two concepts of scientific goodwill (perceived bias and motivation).

Purpose

- Identify the information sources wheat producers consider credible when making decisions about soil health practices.

Methods

Research Design

- Cross-sectional survey design with 38 questions across 10 sections

Sample

- Convenience sample of U.S. wheat producers whose ages ranged from 25 to 75 years old

Instrumentation

- 10 of 27 wheat and grain associations distributed the survey digitally via email lists and newsletters
- 46 usable responses

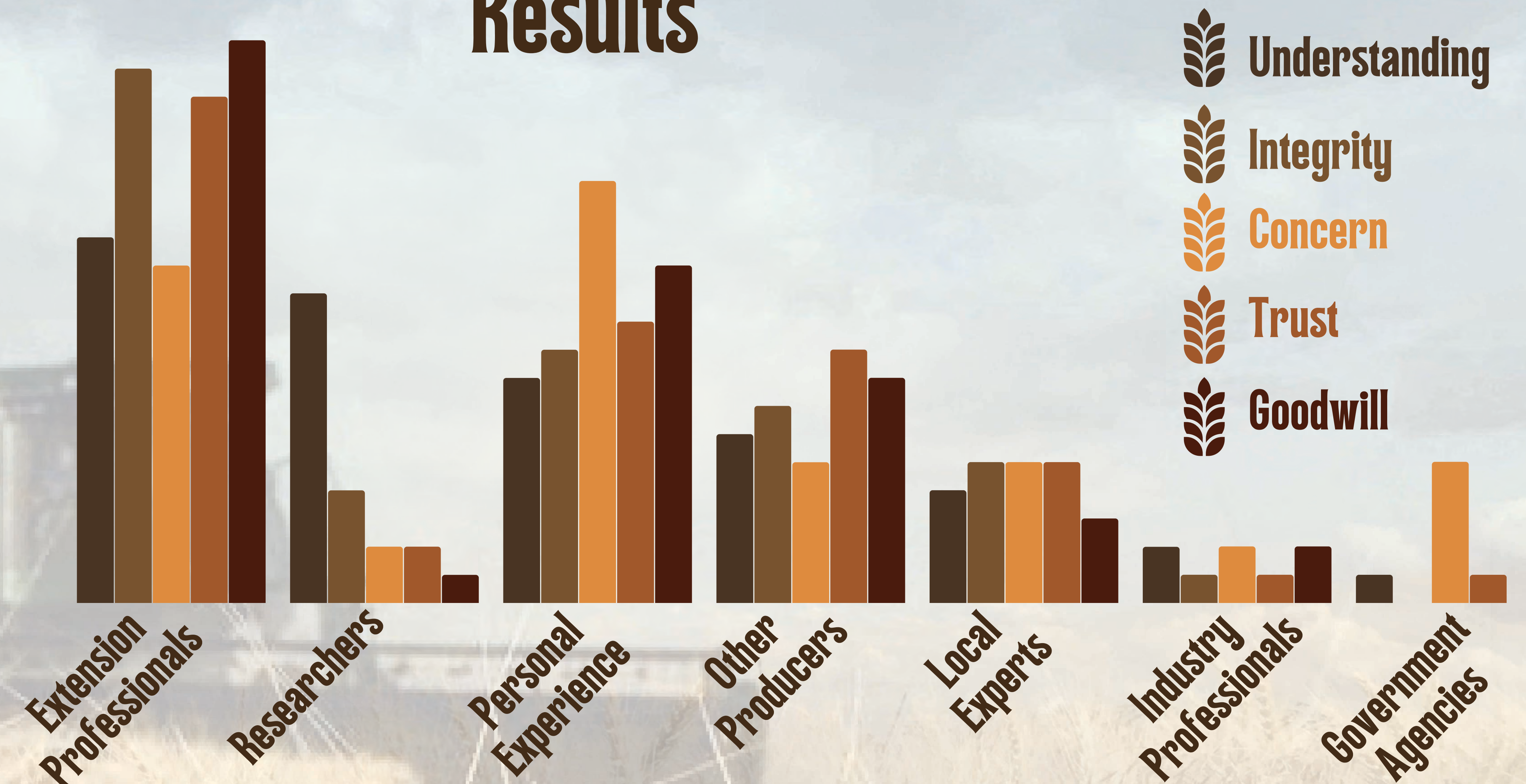
Survey Questions

- Respondents selected and ranked the information source they believed had greatest understanding, integrity, concern, trust, and goodwill regarding soil health practices.

Analysis

- Calculated frequencies and percentages for each information source within each component of source credibility (understanding, integrity, concern, and trust) and two concepts of scientific goodwill (perceived bias and motivation).
- The two components of goodwill were combined for analysis purposes.

Results



Conclusions

- Most respondents selected Extension professionals as having the greatest understanding, integrity, trust, and goodwill.
- Government agencies were not selected to have the most source credibility.
- Respondents selected personal experience, researchers, and extension professionals to have the most goodwill. Therefore, these stakeholders could play an important role in administering soil health practice information.

Implications/Recommendations

- Extension professionals remain a critical avenue for interpersonal communication with agricultural producers, contradicting results from other studies that have found farmers more confident in agribusiness sources and input suppliers.
- Government agencies may need to collaborate with sources selected as more credible to disseminate information (i.e. Extension professionals, other producers).
- Respondents indicated a high need for opportunities to engage with sources who possess extensive experience implementing soil conservation practices.

