



AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority

Effective knowledge transfer through discussion groups

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Presentation to

EAAP Congress

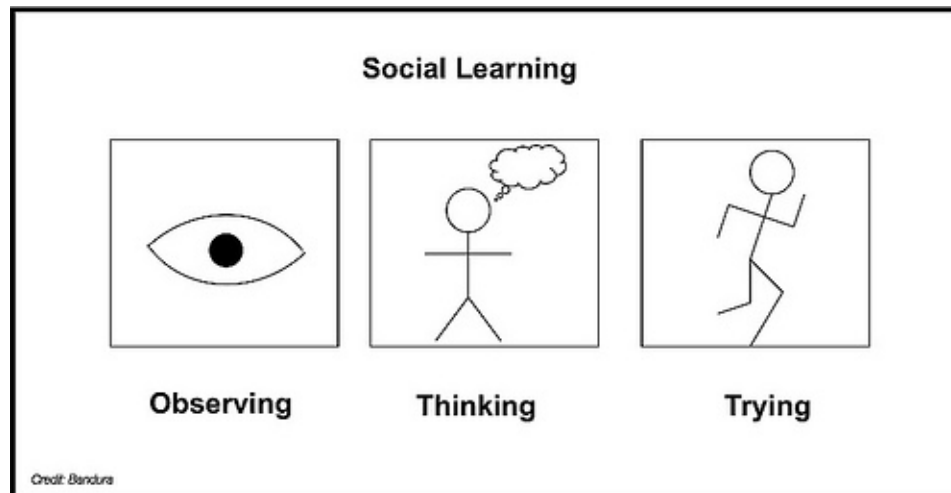
Waterfront Hall, Belfast

1st September 2016

Here's the science...

1. Social learning theory

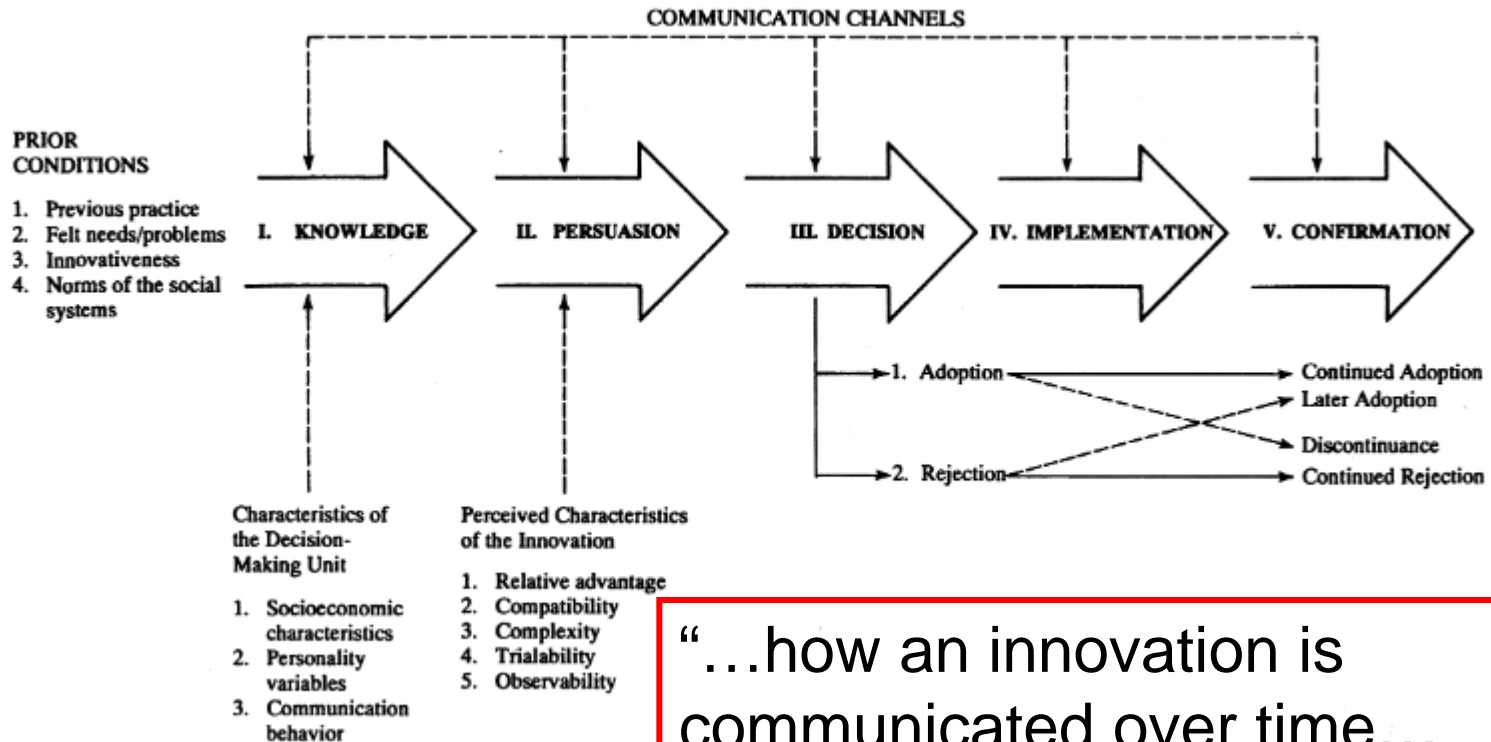
“People learn from one another via observation, imitation and modelling.” *(Bandura)*



“watching, listening, asking questions and doing”

And some more science...

2. The innovation decision process



“...how an innovation is communicated over time... through a social system” (Rogers)

Practice adoption leading to change



Gaining knowledge

Acquiring skills

Changing mindsets/
attitudes

All three
needed for
change

Discussion groups: the key to change



...a group of local farmers who meet regularly on each other's farms to see, discuss and learn (Parminter, 2010)

Learning opportunities for members

- (New) technical information
- Sharing knowledge and experiences
- Picking up new ideas
- Help in solving problems
- Support in trying new ideas
- Positive space
- Interaction with other farmers
- Make friends
- Personal development

Discussion groups act as an effective means for farmers to witness technologies in practice by their peers and thus give members the confidence to apply such technologies in their own businesses (Millar, 2010).

What evidence is there?



Group members are more likely to achieve performance targets...

...and earn €125/cow (2.5 cent/litre or €247/Ha) in additional gross margin



Five ingredients for success

**Membership
and group
organisation**

**Trust and
security**

**Enjoyment and
fun**

Solidarity

**Facilitation and
learning drivers**

The role of the adviser

- Facilitator...not chairperson
- Before/ during / after meeting activities
 - During ... questioning, prompting, involving, challenging
- Group norms/ creating the learning environment
- Technical knowledge (when required)

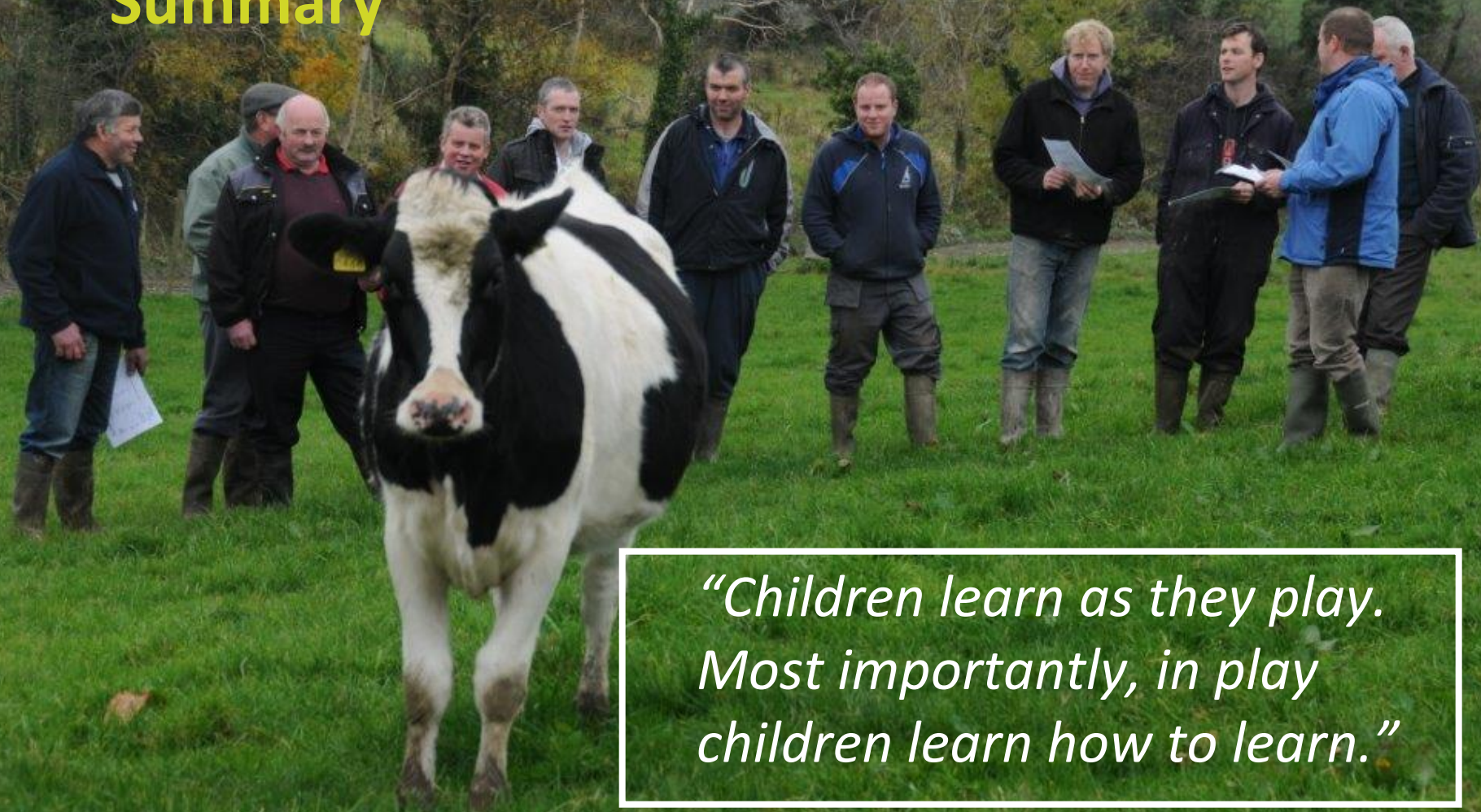
Financial support for discussion groups

- Dairy Efficiency Programme
- Development Programme for Dairying
- Cash Plan Programme
- Beef Technology Adoption Programme
- Sheep Technology Adoption Programme
- KT Groups (2015 – 2021)



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas

Summary



*“Children learn as they play.
Most importantly, in play
children learn how to learn.”*