

Title: *Bridging the Gap: Engaging Peripheral Producers Through Gamified Focus Groups in the Peace Region Living Lab*

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Abstract:

Innovation adoption in agriculture often faces a divide between core producers, who readily engage with new practices, and peripheral producers, who may be more hesitant. This presentation shares observational insights from focus groups held with producers in the Peace Region Living Lab, highlighting key differences in engagement styles, decision-making approaches, and socio-economic factors influencing adoption of beneficial management practices (BMPs).

Through gamified decision-making scenarios designed to simulate real-world agricultural challenges, the focus groups revealed distinct behavioral patterns. Core producers — often early adopters and active living lab participants — shared solution-oriented, strategic responses, while peripheral producers leaned towards practical concerns and risk aversion. The interactive format uncovered nuanced socio-economic barriers affecting peripheral producers, including market access concerns, financial constraints, and social norms within their communities.

Our analysis explores how these insights can inform tailored engagement strategies, fostering a more inclusive innovation ecosystem. By understanding the mindset and motivations of peripheral producers, living labs can adapt participatory models to better integrate their perspectives, ultimately accelerating the broader adoption of BMPs. This work offers actionable recommendations for living lab practitioners, researchers, and policymakers seeking to bridge the innovation adoption gap in diverse agricultural contexts.