On-Farm Experimentation Community Info No. 51

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On-Farm Experimentation Community (OFE-C)

International Society of Precision Agriculture (ISPA)

Special Issue on Farmer-Centric OFE

We invite you to submit your work to special issue "Farmer-centric On-farm Experimentation Enhanced by Digital Agronomy" in Frontiers in Agronomy. The special issue was created specifically for this community. **The deadline for submitting a manuscript summary (optional) is now October. 15th 2026** and the final deadline for manuscript submission is March 1st 2027. Learn more here.

Inspiring from Other Sectors: What Medical Case Reporting Can Teach OFE

Replace "*clinical case report*" with "*on-farm experiment*" and this review maps almost directly onto OFE: detecting novelties, generating hypotheses, in-depth narrative understanding, and value where controlled trials are impossible. The limitations will also sound familiar. Though Pearl's work on causal inference (The Book of Why) would now challenge the claim that case reports cannot establish cause-effect relationships. See a post on this here and the full paper here.

38 Years of Farmer-Led Research: The Practical Farmers of Iowa Cooperators' Program

Since 1987, over 240 farmers have designed and led nearly 1,300 trials through the Practical Farmers of Iowa Cooperators' Program, with farmers setting the research goals and priorities from the start. In 2025 alone, 107 farmers led 185 trials. This is farmer-centric OFE at scale, and arguably the best-documented long-running program of its kind anywhere in the world. Explore the trial reports here.

Who Decides Which Trials Go on Your Farm? The AHDB Farmer Marketplace

The AHDB Farmer Marketplace flips the traditional research model: researchers pitch their on-farm research opportunities, and participating farmers retain full power to opt in or out, deciding which trials happen on their land. It is one of the clearest governance examples of farmer agency in OFE, and a model worth knowing about for anyone thinking about how to structure farmer-scientist partnerships. Learn more here.

£8 Return for Every £1 Invested: The Innovative Farmers Field Labs

The UK's Innovative Farmers program supported a network of around 185 field labs,

each receiving up to £10,000, with an estimated direct benefit of £8 per £1 invested. Beyond the numbers, it demonstrated that farmer-led research can be both scientifically credible and economically compelling. The program concluded in 2022, but its results remain a strong reference for making the case that investing in farmer-centric OFE can pay off. Learn more here.

Farmer-Led, Scientist-Supported: The Farmers DataLab at Cornell

Farmers set the questions, scientists quantify the effects. That is the philosophy behind the Farmers DataLab at Cornell, and this article captures what becomes possible when farmers and scientists genuinely collaborate. Graduate student Katie Rohrbaugh puts it simply: "Farmers know their land better than a scientist ever could... it's a skill-share." A good read for anyone in the OFE community, and a useful resource to share with colleagues who are new to the concept. Read the full article here.

This letter was prepared by Louis Longchamps, co-chair of the ISPA OFE Community
Should you have something to share with the Community or the Community leaders, let us know here.