BRIDGING THE SCIENCE-TO-POLICY GAP IN AGRI-FOOD PUBLIC HEALTH
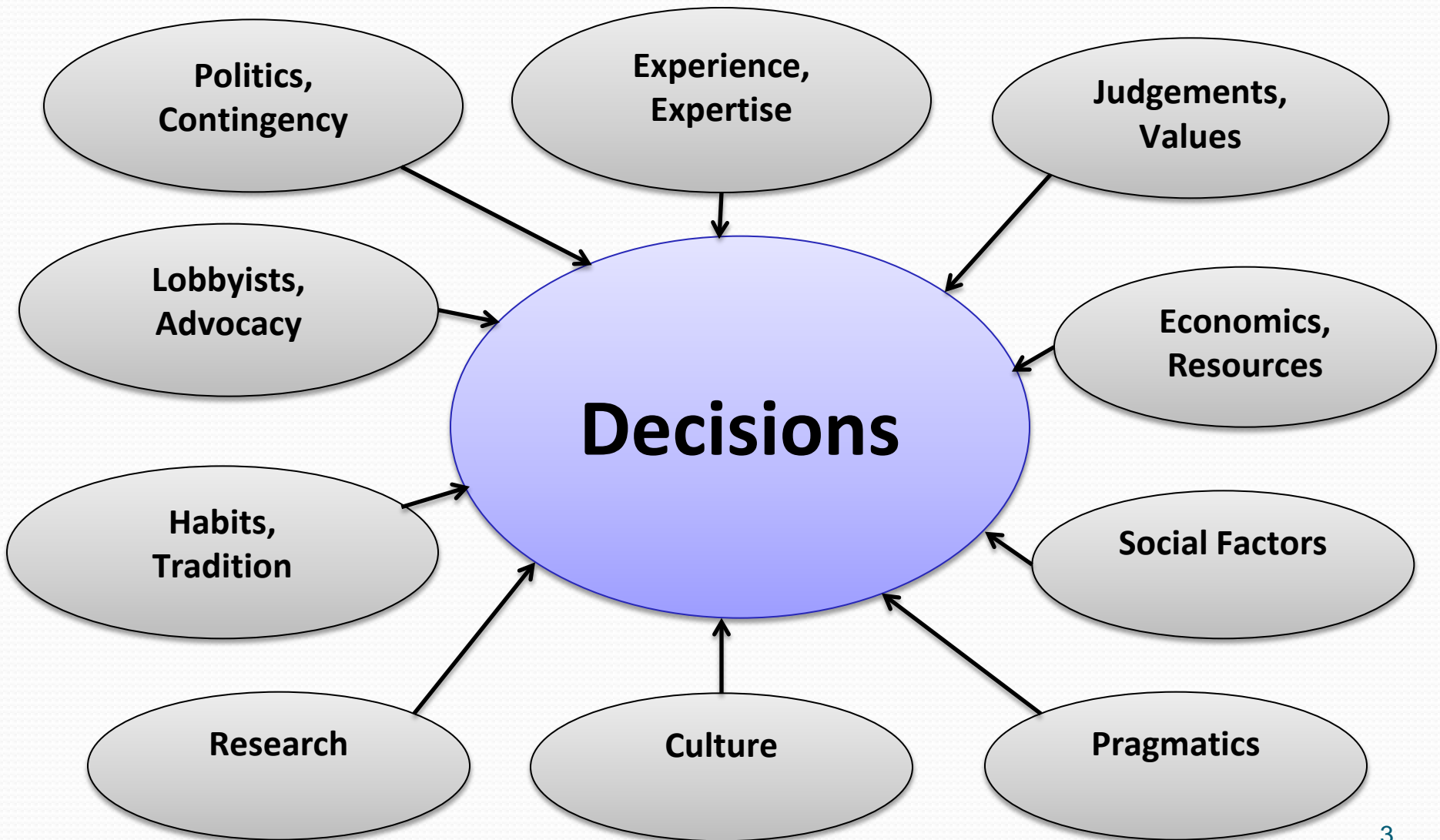
Ian Young, Andrijana Rajić and Scott McEwen

In collaboration with: Lisa Waddell, Barbara Marshall, Kate Thomas, Katarina Pintar, Judy Greig, Javier Sanchez and Andrew Papadopoulos

OMAFRA Emergency Management Research Expo, December 7, 2012

Complex Policy Issues

Policy- and Decision-Making

Politics, Contingency

Experience, Expertise

Judgements, Values

Lobbyists, Advocacy

Economics, Resources

Decisions

Habits, Tradition

Social Factors

Research

Culture
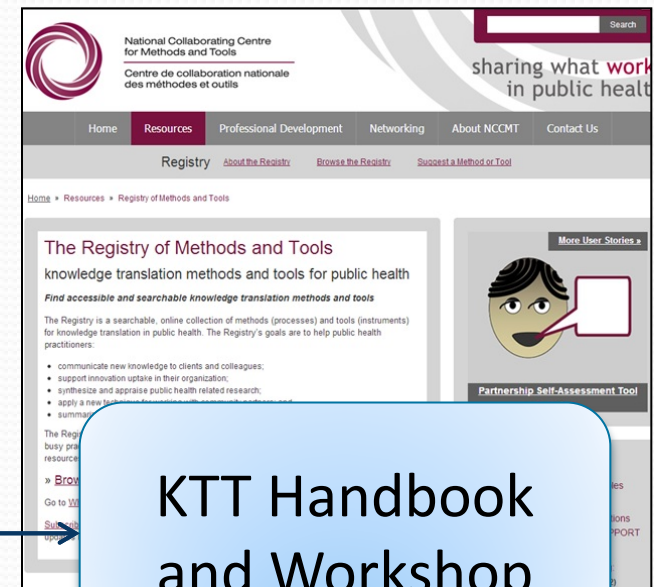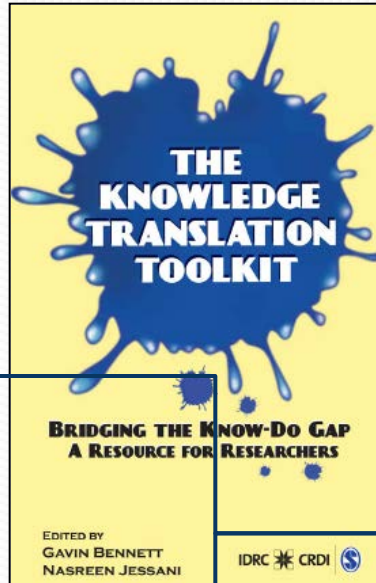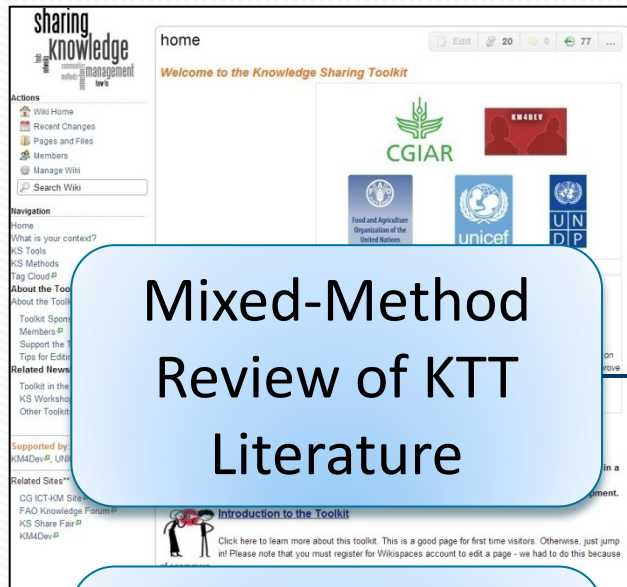
Pragmatics

3

What is KTT?

Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT)

- Dynamic and iterative process that includes *synthesis*, *dissemination*, *exchange* and *ethically-sound application* of knowledge to inform decision-making

(CIHR 2012)

Development of KTT Handbook and Workshop

Mixed-Method Review of KTT Literature

Focus Groups / Interviews with Stakeholders

KTT Handbook and Workshop

Focus Groups and Interviews

- Five focus groups and five interviews conducted in 2012

  - Policy-makers and those who support them working at the agri-food and public health interface

- Qualitative content analysis revealed six key themes about how to improve evidence-informed policy-making in this sector

1. Supporting Policy with Credible Evidence

- Peer-reviewed and other trustworthy sources
  - Industry reports, surveillance and field data, expert opinion

- Communicating scientific uncertainty

"It really becomes a question of bringing pieces of information to a narrative as opposed to having a conclusive, scientific iron-clad case."

2. Integrating Diverse Policy Inputs

- Scientific evidence is only one "lens"

- Multiple interests and mandates among stakeholders can conflict

"Not every policy issue has a science part to it… there's lots of considerations that I think have to be made, and the fact remains that we do our job and we provide the best advice. If the minister says, for whatever reason, 'I want to do something else', that's their prerogative."

3. Recognizing and Adapting to the Policy Context

- Clear objectives

- Type of policy being addressed
  - E.g. Strategic vs. regulatory

- Reactive vs. proactive policy

"If you're looking at something like a policy in response to a specific crisis... in that case it's really about what can you access quickly that you consider to be reliable."

4. Communicating Research Messages

- Succinct, user-friendly, plain language

- "So what"?

- New technologies
  - E.g. Web 2.0 and social media

"I call it 'spreading rumours' which makes everyone laugh but it's the idea that I will take my data and my evidence and get it down to a really precise sound bite that anyone could understand and get it to be repeated on the mouths of senior officials across agriculture and health consistently until finally they understand and they think it's their own idea."

5. Creating and Maintaining Relationships

- Reliance on ongoing and trusted relationships

- Stronger science-policy integration

  - E.g. Communities of practice, knowledge brokers, funding agencies

"Everybody has their 'go to' people, the experts and who they know or who they can call in different subjects."

6. Changing Organizational Capacity and Skills

- Need for culture "paradigm shift"

- Enhanced training and education

"I can remember my second day of work 33 years ago, I was called in by my DG and he said your job is 'do good science,' and back then that's what my job was. But over 33 years I've got to be a communicator, I've got to translate the science into understandable language for policy-makers… So the traditional training of scientists, I hope it's changing, but traditionally we weren't communicators."

KTT Handbook and Workshop

Agri-Food and Rural **Link**

A program of the OMAFRA – U of G Partnership

Mobilizing Agri-Food and Rural Research Knowledge

Best practices handbook coming for knowledge synthesis and translation

▶ *By Joey Sabljic, SPARK writer*

The book is soon to be out on the most effective knowledge synthesis and translation tools and techniques, thanks to a group of Guelph researchers.

Andrijana Rajić, a scientist from the Public Health Agency of Canada, is working with Prof. Scott McEwen and post-doctoral fellow Ian Young from the Department of Population Medicine to develop a knowledge synthesis and translation support tools handbook.

The idea behind the handbook is to give researchers and decision-makers in the agri-food and public health sectors practical and robust methods and tools that they can use to summarize and share research. The overall goal is support evidence-informed policy decisions.

"We specifically need to create something that's targeted towards people within the agri-food sector," says Young. "It's helping to give these professionals a better understanding of methods that work, and how they can use them in their daily work."

The team has extensively evaluated research in the healthcare and other sectors to develop a list of the most widely used and recommended methods and tools for knowledge synthesis and translation. The list includes plain-language research and contextual summaries, policy briefs and stakeholder engagement in systematic reviews, among many others.

The handbook will explain what types of knowledge synthesis and sharing tools are available, and how to implement them to make research findings more relevant and easily available to end-users. It will illustrate these tools using practical agri-food and public health examples. For example, it will help users to determine the best method to share research about effective on-farm food safety practices with producers, policy-makers or other stakeholders.

SPARK Students Promoting Awareness of Research Knowledge

UNIVERSITY of GUELPH

Bridging the Gap between Science and Policy in Agri-Food Public Health

A two-day workshop and training session at the Guelph Holiday Inn

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March 6, 2013: Workshop

- An educational and interactive workshop for policy-makers, researchers and others at the interface of science and policy in agri-food public health
- Learn about unique experiences and perspectives from four key science-to-policy champions

March 7, 2013: Training

- A training session for policy and research analysts, advisors and others that support policy-making in the agri-food sector
- Learn about key methods to support science-to-policy
- Participate in "hands-on" exercises and interactive discussions on real-life scenarios
- Course Instructors:
  Dr. Andrijana Rajić, UofG/PHAC
  Dr. Ian Young, UofG/PHAC

Workshop Keynote Speakers

Dr. John Lavis
Professor, McMaster University
Interests in KTT and policy-making in Canadian and international health systems.

Dr. Martine Dubuc
VP Science, CFIA
Experience in science-to-policy in the Canadian and international agri-food sector.

Dr. David Mowat
MOH, Peel Region
Experience in evidence-informed public health from the local to national level.

Dr. Wayne Lees
CVO, Manitoba
Science-to-policy experience at the human, animal and environment interface.

For more information, contact Ian Young: iyoung@uoguelph.ca

To register please visit: http://science-to-policy.eventbrite.ca

Organized by: Andrijana Rajić, Ian Young, Scott McEwen and the KTT Colaborating Team

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Public Health Agency of Canada / Agence de santé publique du Canada

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- KTT Collaborating Team

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- LFZ/PHAC:

  - Mariola Mascarenhas, Ashley Kerr, Sheila Keay, Kathleen Gropp, Farzeen Foda, Mia Cikovic

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