



2023 Canadian Phytopathological Society-Canadian Society of Agronomy-Canadian Society for Horticultural Science (CPS-CSA-CSHS) Tri-Society Meeting

Panel Discussion:

Communicating Our Science to the General Public and Policymakers

[June 20, 2023, Tuesday, 11 am – 12:30 pm]

Introduction: Agriculture and forestry intensification, global trade, and climate change increase the incidence and spreading of existing, emergent, and invasive diseases, threatening agricultural production and natural ecosystems. The general public and stakeholders expect the scientists, regulators, and policymakers to speak up on timely and long-standing issues that have profound impacts on the health, economy, environment, and their daily lives. Scientists are expected to provide independent advice to policy and decision makers with the best-available evidence and are being asked to make statements on science-related issues through their scientific publications but also through mainstream media (e.g., magazine, radio and TV interviews, documentary broadcasting, etc.), online forums and social media, citizen science, as well as teaching activities.

To ensure food safety and security, protect the forests, the biodiversity and the environment, and maintain ecological goods and services, plant pathologists need to engage the public, stakeholders, and policymakers and raise awareness about the damages caused by plant pests and pathogens, the control measures and strategies, and risk forecasting and management schemes for plant protection. There is an increasing need for effective science communication targeted to decision-makers but also to make key science findings more readily identified and accessible to the general public.

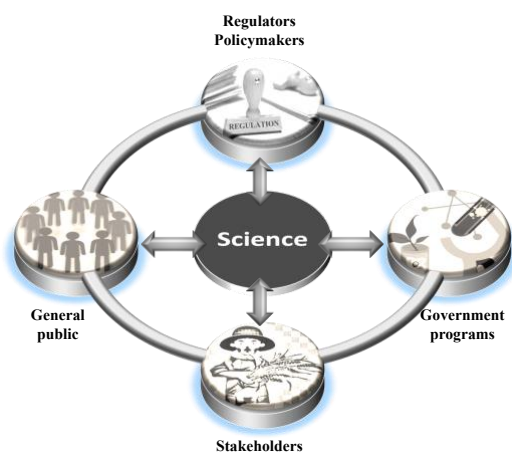


Figure 1. Feedback loops involving science

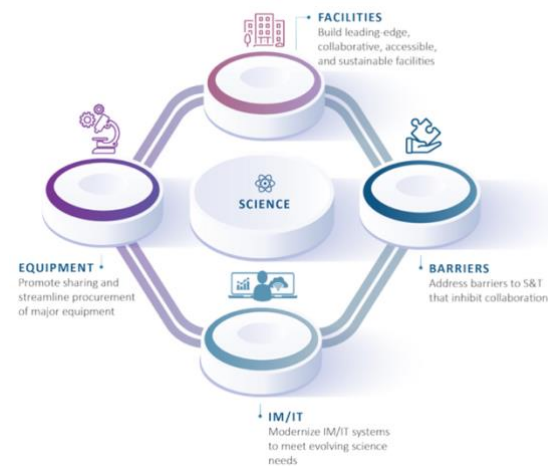


Figure 2. Four pillars of Laboratories Canada

Panelists

Moderator (Confirmed):

- C. André Lévesque – Former research scientist, CPS President, and science executive in the public service, with leaderships in developing programs and policies for large R&D centers and Canada-wide R&D initiatives.

Panelists (Invitees):

- J. William (Bill) Anderson [**Confirmed**] – Executive Director, Plant Health Science Directorate of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Bill was previously the Executive Director of the Plant Health and Biosecurity Directorate in the CFIA’s Policy and Programs Branch.
- Marcos Alvarez - Executive Director of Pest Management Centre, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Kelly Turkington [**Confirmed**] – Plant Pathologist with the Lacombe Research and Development Centre, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, in Lacombe, Alberta.

Draft agenda:

- Opening – welcome remarks
- Introduction of panelists
Introduction of each speaker
Each has 5 min to introduce himself (with one slide?)
- Questions/topics for panelists.
Here are some options:
 - What is different between communicating science to policy makers and to the general public? What is your experience? How can scientists be better at it?
 - Science can influence policy (e.g., addressing a new issue identified by science) but policy can influence science (e.g., new regulations creating new science needs). Have you seen changes in this science-driven vs. policy-science environment over the past few years? Is there a threat to the “science-based” activities and decision making in society and government?
 - Scientists and doctors are still at the top among the most trustworthy professions, but there has been a significant drop following the pandemic (9% drop in US). What is the role of scientists and scientific societies in this world where there is so much misinformation and virtual echo-chambers where people with same beliefs exchange with themselves without any critical thinking voices?
- QA session (open to audience)
- Closing remarks