News Media for Awareness and Advocacy in Livestock Research for Development

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The Challenge

• Communications that target news media are public/official kinds of communications
• They may contain news (hard news stories), stories (feature articles) or opinions (op-eds)
• They are intensively ‘produced’ and institutionally vetted
• Print and online media are changing fast and dramatically, blurring traditional boundaries
The Approach

• Engage: The public have a right to know—and, they don’t speak science
• Keep public awareness and public relations work distinct; employ different approaches
• Tailor vehicles as appropriate: Advisory, news release, media roundtable, field visit, interview, phone chat, pitching a story
• Tell stories and use visuals (images, data journalism, infographics, short videos)
Do’s and Don’ts

Don’t

• Worry if the media sometimes get things wrong
• Produce videos of ‘talking heads’ or give everyone equal air time (this is not a democracy)
• Produce long (expensive) documentaries (unless you have a ready market for them)

DO

• Show rather than tell
• Note down what strikes you immediately after an interview and organize your story/article around that
• Do quick film interviews of interesting speakers
Insights Gained

- Create a voice from the ‘South’ distinct from the voice from the ‘North’
- We can’t ‘manage’ the media but we can manage your relations with the media & partners
- All media is ‘new media’ these days: If we don’t keep up, we’ll be left behind
- Say when you are speaking from science vs when you are giving an opinion
Key Lessons

• Speak in a natural voice
• Tell stories
• Tell the truth—and say why it matters
• Keep you partners close
• Keep communicating
• Boring people is a crime against humanity
• Mastery takes lots and lots of practice
Links

• ILRI News Blog: News.ilri.org

• ILRI Clippings Blog: Clippings.ilri.org

• ILRI YouTube: YouTube.com/user/ILRIFILM

• ILRI Feeds: ILRI.org/NewsFeeds

• CGSpace: CGSpace.cgiar.org