Science Societies

Agricultural scientists must engage in constructive politics

November 19, 2020



An agricultural science researcher describes a cross-sector collaboration (the Forever Green project) at a press conference in 2019. Photo courtesy of the Land Stewardship Project.

Authors of a recent *Crop Science* article argue that scientists must engage in politics of constructive collective action to effectively meet agriculture's grand challenges in the 21st century. These challenges include increasing nutritional security worldwide, providing climate solutions and otherwise enhancing agriculture's environmental effects, and improving equity and justice in agricultural and food systems.

The authors outlined constructive politics that provide solutions to grand challenges through collective action that links and leverages multiple innovations. These politics entail (1) building bonds of affinity within heterogenous networks, (2) developing a shared roadmap for collective action, and (3) taking sustained action together. Agricultural scientists can help co-create these solutions by sharing their expertise and creativity in all parts of these politics. Not all scientists must become active in these politics, according to the authors, but the culture of agricultural science must embrace political engagement as an integral part of the social role of science.

This political engagement will require building skills and mindsets and ongoing critical and creative thinking about how science and politics fit together. The authors argue that the gravity of grand challenges, such as climate change, urgently demands that agricultural science makes a strong turn toward these constructive politics.

Dig deeper

Jordan, N., Gutknecht, J., Bybee-Finley, K., Hunter, M., Krupnik, T., Pittelkow, C., Prasad, P., & Snapp, S. (2020). To meet grand challenges, agricultural scientists must engage in the politics of constructive collective action. *Crop Science*.

https://doi.org/10.1002/csc2.20318 (in press).

More news & perspectives

Back to issue

Back to home

Text © . The authors. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. Except where otherwise noted, images are subject to copyright. Any reuse without express permission from the copyright owner is prohibited.