Figure 1.
Figure 2.
Discussion

- Findings suggest the standard effect history needs to be revised.
- Markers hidden in the treatment had no influence.
- Study our hypotheses for explanations.
- Future research should continue to explore the bounds of this effect.
Stories have power

• Scientific expertise, complexity, unintuitive results are barriers.
• But the human experience surrounding agriculture can build connections.
• Stories connect us to each other.
Today’s Goals

• How storytelling influences audiences
• How storytelling intersects with science
• Important decision points when creating stories
• Get you telling stories!
Activity time!

• Pull out a sheet of scratch paper
• And take 30 seconds to make a bulleted list of what you did yesterday
Science Communication

• How do you communicate about animal agriculture?
• In what format is usually presented?
Common Formats

- **Expository**: Descriptive or explanatory
  - Textbooks, fact sheets, etc.
- **Argumentative**: Supporting a claim
  - Journal articles, advocacy messages, etc.
- **Narrative**: Placing science in a story format
  - Anecdotes, testimonials, personal conversation, etc.

(A vraamidou & Osborne, 2009)
Narratives

• What defines a narrative?
Narratives

• What defines a narrative?
  • a temporal sequence of events
  • cause-and-effect linkages
  • specific humanlike characters

• In other words...
  • A particular personal experience of a larger phenomenon.
Narratives

- Expository/argumentative vs. Narrative?
  - Context-free vs. context-dependent
  - Direction of generalization
  - Accuracy vs. Coherence

(Bruner, 1986; Strange, 2002)
Two cognitive pathways
Two cognitive pathways

expository / argumentative

narrative

(Fisher, 1984)
Narrative

• These paths are not equal
  • Narratives are:
    • Easier to comprehend
    • Processed faster
    • Recalled easier
    • Carry greater weight for decision-making
  • Exemplification theory

(Schank & Abelson, 1995; Graesser, Olde & Klettke, 2002; Zillmann, 2002; 2006)
Science Stories

• Stories are the default mode of human thought
• How we cognitively structure information to interpret reality
  • How did you structure your bullet points?
  • Homo Narrans
Science Storytelling

- Put into Practice?
  - Narratives are complex communication structures
  - More complicated than just “using a narrative.”
How to incorporate stories?

1. Anecdotes / Exemplars
   • Make the abstract concrete
   • Allow audience to identify with character
   • Attention-getting and persuasive
   • Your topic is about something relevant to your audience - show it in action!
Anecdote about Anecdotes

- Conservation brochures focused on women landowners
Anecdote about Anecdotes

Neighbor Story
Jean Truelsen uses cover crops, strip-till and no-till to protect her soil. “It’s wellness for the land just like we do wellness for our bodies.” Her tenants plant oats and radishes before corn and rye and radishes before soybeans. She says if you can afford it, you should go down on the rent and try a few acres. “We have to come into a new age because our land is so important. Manage it like your own health and take care of it. It’s family!”
Take 2 minutes...

- Does your topic have obvious anecdotes?
- Access to real stories or fictionalize?
- How many anecdotes to demonstrate enough aspects of your topic?
- Most relevant character(s)?
- Show success or failure?
- Extreme or representative?
How to incorporate stories?

2

- Story Pattern of Organization
  - Organize around a challenge
  - Specific character
  - Chronologic order
  - Drama is good
  - Requires confusion, doubt, conflict, etc.
AAA Organization

Fact AND
Fact AND
Fact AND
Fact AND
Fact
AAA Organization

Fact

AND

Fact

AND

Fact

AND

Fact

AND

Fact
AAA Organization

Fact
AND
Fact
AND
Fact
AND
Fact

✓ Clear!

? Engaging
AAA Organization

Fact

AND

Fact

AND

Fact

AND

Fact

AND

Clear!

? Engaging
This “BUT” is where you get your drama.

It provides a reason for your character to act.

And a reason for your audience to continue listening.
Goldilocks ate one bowl of porridge.

- It was too hot!

- THEREFORE

Goldilocks ate another bowl of porridge.

- It was too cold!

- THEREFORE

Goldilocks ate a third bowl of porridge.

- It was just right.

- AND

- THEREFORE

She ate it all up.
Take 2 minutes...

• Who is your main character?
  • Your audience? Yourself?
• Is there an obvious chronological order?
• Where's your drama?
  • Identify the "BUT" and resulting “THEREFORE” in your story outline.
It’s your turn to speak
Summary

• Storytelling offers informative and persuasive benefits for communicators

• Consider incorporating anecdotes/exemplars and a story pattern of organization when crafting your next message
Discussion

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Science Communication Workshop: Making Your Message Matter through Storytelling

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