

The internet is foremost in the new SLU communication policy

The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences has developed a new communication policy. The increased role of the web and the need for dialogue instead of one-way information transfer are two key elements. We asked Tina Zethraeus, head of information at SLU, to tell us more.

Why did you need a new communication strategy?

SLU has a long and effective tradition of research communication and contacts outside the university. However, we still needed a readily accessible platform from which to interact with the outside world. In addition, a recent evaluation has highlighted the need to market ourselves better.



Tina Zethraeus
Photo: Åsa Eriksson

What is the most important feature of the policy?

The most important and pleasing result was the consensus about the need for two-way communication. Dialogue is preferable to unidirectional communication.

The policy highlights the web. Why?

The role of the web is, perhaps, most pronounced in our communication with potential students. The internet helps us to communicate across a wide area, both nationally and internationally. We have a lively Facebook page and research blog, as well as postings on Twitter. The web is also the priority channel for communication among researchers.

The web offers opportunities to encourage broad public participation in research projects; for example posting species and phenological records. In addition to the web, we also offer stakeholders direct participation in research, as in the programs Future Forest and Future Agriculture

We are now changing the web tools we use, and are on track to benefit fully from the opportunities associated with features such as being able to post comments.

Who are the most important target groups for information from SLU?

Employees and students are prioritised – internal information takes precedence over external information! Potential students, research agencies and the agriculture and forestry sectors are other important target groups.

How should the scientists deliver their results to those who can make use of them?

We have recently established an Assistant Vice-Chancellor responsible for cooperation. About 20 researchers will be appointed to posts in which half their time will be spent in cooperation activities, involving the public and industry.

Has SLU succeeded in making itself visible within the communication flood?

The research findings are often used as a base for political decisions. Research has been widely reported in the media. Recently, a lot of articles about wolf and lynx have referred to our research. Topics such as organic farming, climate change and GMOs have appeared in the news over a longer period of time. One of our ambitions is to increase our presence in foreign media.



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The number of generations per year is greatly influenced by temperature conditions, but it is the brood tree availability that determines the reproductive success and, thus, the population size and risk of attacks on living trees.

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Project: "The potential impact of climate change on spruce bark beetle populations in Scandinavian countries". It is a co-operation between Lund University (Sweden); University of Copenhagen (Denmark); Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute; Forest & Landscape Denmark; SLU (Sweden)

Read more:

Jönsson, A.M., Harding, S., Barring, L., & Ravn, H.P. (2007) Impact of the climate change on the population dynamics of *Ips typographus* in southern Sweden. *Agricultural and Forest Meteorology*, 146, 70-81.

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