**Application:** Grassland management is explained as a socio-cultural practice, and a practice-ready extension approach, developed using socio-cultural insights, is described.

**Introduction:** Farmers’ decisions, particularly those of family farmers, are informed by a range of information sources, which often include forms of knowledge accumulated within territories and communities over generations. New grassland management practices are introduced to farmers often by agricultural advisors, who formulate advice on the basis of science. The process of translation from science to advisors to farmers is a socio-cultural practice of communication, deliberation and, often, negotiation between the cohorts involved. This paper explicates farmers’ decisions and behaviours regarding grassland management as a socio-cultural practice. Taking a focus on the Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems (AKIS) and efforts and influences of scientists, advisors, farmers and others within it, the paper outlines a socio-cultural approach that accommodates multidirectional flows within the AKIS, resulting in interventions that directly support more sustainable grassland use.

**Materials and Methods:** A qualitative research approach was taken using sociological frameworks and in-depth interviews and focus groups. Interviews were undertaken with Irish dairy and beef farmers over a ten-year period, involving two separate studies. Interviews elicited farmers’ experiences of grassland management and the values, perspectives, knowledges and cultural scripts generated during those experiences that resulted in particular decisions and behaviours. Analysis of interviews was conducted thematically and similar experiences were reported by farmers pertaining to two grassland management practices: paddock grazing and use of clover. On the basis of findings of the analysis of interview data, a multi-actor co-design process was implemented with agricultural advisors, scientists and farmers to devise an extension approach to address the challenges and opportunities identified.

**Results:** Grassland management practices (whether paddock grazing or use of clover) are likely to be rejected by farmers if the practices don’t correspond to their existing values, experiences, knowledge etc. When practices are translated from science in generic form from the lab’ to the farm, they are less likely to be understood and accepted by farmers than when advisors take active roles in translating and adapting practices to have specific relevance to a specific farmer and farm. Knowledge flows within AKISs are multi-directional and different actors (scientists, advisors and farmers) have various and intersecting influences in processes of interrogation, translation and adaptation of new knowledge. An approach for agricultural extension that foresees, accommodates and enhances the socio-cultural nature of these processes is likely to be more successful than traditional ‘top down’ approaches.

**Conclusions:** As new practices emerge and are promoted to farmers, particularly in the context of climate change, it is not necessarily the case that entirely new extension challenges arise. Regarding the two technologies/practices under focus in this paper - paddock grazing and clover use - the same socio-cultural processes emerge and similar types of interventions can successfully address challenges and opportunities. The results of this paper suggest that AKIS-oriented extension approaches based on a socio-cultural understanding of grassland management are potentially adaptable and transferable to a wider range of practices. This is important, particularly in the context of climate change and the need to amplify the impacts of science at farm-level.

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