

Scientists losing credibility

By Jo Nova, <http://joannenova.com.au/>

Public are not buying ‘experts’ opinions: AAAS survey shows 30% - 50% gap.

There is a large gap between what the certified appointed experts say and what the public thinks on GM, Climate Change, pesticides, ethics, and sigh, on evolution. The researchers were “surprised” that a collective pool of university educated, largely government employed scientists have a different spread of opinions to the population at large. On climate change half of the public are skeptics that man-made effects are dominant. In the AAAS, 87% of scientists think it is. But despite twenty years of propaganda the public are not buying their message.

Two-thirds of **geoscientists and engineers** are skeptics

UPDATE: Given that 48% of **Meteorologists** are skeptics and survey after survey shows that two-thirds of **geoscientists and engineers** are skeptics, the 87% figure “across the sciences” seems hard to believe. 3748 members of AAAS took the survey — and as **A.Scott** points out on WUWT in comments, only 7% of the respondents were from the Earth Sciences, and nearly half were “biomedical”. Link to the **survey Questions**. See **TdeF** in comment. H/t to Michael for **the tip** about Scott.

The answer is not more propaganda

....it’s open public debate.

To resolve the gap, scientists naturally think the public needs more education. But perhaps it’s the scientists who need to learn to start reasoning and stop namecalling instead — “denier”. The public knows that isn’t science.

We never hear a climate scientist pull up colleagues for using a fallacious form of reasoning. *Welcome to modern climate science. Was than an ad hom? Well, I’ll cheer you on.*

Air these taboo topics in open debate

The answer is not to train more obedient citizens to respect official doctrines, but to air these taboo topics in open debate. If the scientists really are right, and the evidence is overwhelming, the citizens will see their questions answered and move towards the settled science view. If science is a bureaucratized sink-hole of groupthink stuck in a dead end hypothesis, some dead-wood will go, and the gap closes toward the public.

These issues are so polarized there isn’t a forum where the best of both sides hammer it out while the crowd watches — so the gap grows. The public know they are not being told the whole story. The Internet is the closest it gets to real debate, but Unskeptical Scientists are running away.

The brand name “science” is falling

The Star of Science is tarnishing fast. Both scientists and the public are feeling down about it. When asked about U.S. scientific achievements, in 2009 65% thought theirs were the best in the world or at least above average. But now it is down 11 points to 54%. That’s a big fall in a short time. It seems a bit devastating that nearly half of all US citizens apparently don’t think US science is even “above average”. The land that put man on the moon isn’t sure any more if it’s better at science than, say, Venezuela.

Four out of five adults say science has improved their life and healthcare, but only 3 out of five say the same about the environment and food (would you like a cholesterol-free climate?) Diet science is up there with long range rainfall predictions. The good brand-name and goodwill of science is being eroded away.

Government not needed for science to advance

One third say we don't need the government for science to advance

One response surprised me — about 40% of people don't think government investment is *essential* for science. I had no idea it was so high in the US and one third even say “private investment is enough”. In Australia I don't know what those numbers would be. The idea is so strange, I'm not sure if anyone has even thought to ask. *Some 61% say that government investment is essential for scientific progress, while 34% say that private investment is enough to ensure that scientific progress is made.*

There is a lot to discuss with these results...