

Funding priorities and climate change: Lessons from agriculture and action-oriented science

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ABSTRACT ORIGINAL

Billions of dollars get spent every year on climate change research-whether trying to understand its mechanisms, or how to intervene to prevent some of its catastrophic consequences. While the enormous industry of climate change science leaves plenty of room for pursuing a wide array of projects, there remain pertinent questions about identifying the most promising potential disruptive innovations with regards to climate change. To make things more complicated, the context of application is usually several degrees of separation away from where most climate change science gets pursued. This disconnect between research and action makes the problem of identifying research priorities especially challenging in this context. The purpose of this chapter is to make progress on this topic by interpreting the funding situations behind two case studies on disruptive innovations on climate change. First, the chapter considers holistic management or a series of techniques for rotating livestock which arguably has the potential to create more effective carbon sinks. Second, it considers some of the projects funded by the Paul K. Feyerabend Foundation related to environmental understanding and action. Finally, the chapter considers the various ways in which funding agencies have been successful or hampered in supporting important disruptive innovations, showing how this can relate to institutional demarcation criteria about what counts as 'science.' © 2026 Donald S. Maier, Justin Donhauser, and Michael Weber. All rights reserved.