



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 19

Looking into farmers' knowledge and use of biological plant protection in Latvia

Biological plant protection (BPP) methods are receiving growing attention among farmers as a means for protecting crops in more sustainable ways. However, farmers' knowledge about BPP and application of these methods in Latvia remain limited. According to the survey carried out in the AgriLink project, in Vidzeme region (Latvia) organic, small-scale, and greenhouse farmers are the principal users of biological control of insect pests. These farmers apply various experience-based methods to strengthen plants and repel insects and diseases from their fields, like spraying slurry and plant-based infusions, using crop rotation and companion planting of pest-repelling crops. Farmers find these methods have proven their efficacy in practice, are comparatively inexpensive or/and easily applicable. Often knowledge of these methods is transferred in the farming community within personal social networks, including between farming generations. In turn, commercial biological pest control products are not very popular among Latvian farmers yet. Limited information, (scientific) evidence and advice are among the key reasons restraining farmers from the application of commercial BPP products. These preliminary results suggest that improvements in agricultural education and advisory support on BPP is needed to facilitate a wider uptake and more informed use of both non-commercial and commercial BPP methods in the farming community, also taking advantage of the valuable local knowledge of farmers already successfully applying BPP.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This Practice Abstract is derived from Biological pest control cluster, which is one of nine agricultural innovation areas studied in the AgriLink project. Each innovation area or cluster aims to understand why, how and from whom European farmers and farm managers gather and exchange information to underpin their decision-making regarding the adoption (or not) of a specific type of innovation. More information about the AgriLink innovation clusters and cases studies can be found here:

<https://www.agrilink2020.eu/work-package/wp2-innovation-case-studies-in-focus-regions-micro-to-meso-akis-analysis/>.



ABOUT AGRILINK

AgriLink is a multi-actor project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It brings together 16 partners from 13 countries, including universities, applied research institutes, advisors and consultants from public organisations, private SMEs, a farmer-based organisation and specialists in communication and distance learning.

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All the Practice Abstracts prepared by the AgriLink project in the EIP-AGRI common format can be found here:
<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/agrilink-agricultural-knowledge-linking-farmers>