AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE: LINKING FARMERS, ADVISORS AND RESEARCHERS TO BOOST INNOVATION

PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 20

Advisory challenges in the field of biological and integrated pest control

Biological and integrated pest control (B/IPC) are methods of controlling pests in agriculture, such as insects, weeds and diseases, through the use of natural enemies. As B/IPC involves reduced pesticide use, they are tools to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, producers' and consumers' safety, and mitigate climate change in agriculture. Five case studies explored in the AgriLink project in Greece (sexual confusion of insects), Latvia (biological plant protection methods), Portugal (biological control of grapevine pests), Spain (integrated pest management) and the Netherlands (targeted cultivation for nematode control) are analysing the roles of agricultural advisory organisations in the uptake of B/IPC in farms. These examples show that in supporting farmers in the adoption of B/IPC, advisors have to deal with a range of challenges. In general, (re)educating the agri-food community, including advisors, on natural processes in agriculture and benefits of B/IPC is needed. B/IPC has been practised for centuries with a considerable stock of local knowledge having been accumulated; simultaneously scientific advancements suggest innovative methods for increasing farm efficiency. Acknowledgement of this diversity of knowledge – including farmer knowledge and scientific knowledge – and their assemblage is another challenge in B/IPC. Moreover, since many B/IPC methods are collaborative and participatory innovations, working within such collective arrangements demands new competencies and social skills from advisors. Finally, ICT-literacy among advisors and farmers is of growing importance as ICT-based BPC tools are becoming commonplace.

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KEY WORDS:

#biological pest control, #integrated pest control, #knowledge, #challenges, #advisors

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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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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 727577.

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