



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 48

AUTHOR(S):

Christina Noble
James Hutton Institute

Adoption of variable rate precision farming technologies in North-east Scotland

The AgriLink project seeks to investigate different innovations in agriculture to facilitate farmers adopting more sustainable agricultural practices. Variable rate precision farming technology is one such innovation that applies materials such as chemicals, fertilisers and seeds to fields using an automated system within specialised machinery. After an initial soil sampling exercise, a map is produced demonstrating the levels of different nutrients in the field and allows the farmer or contractor to program machinery to apply material to certain areas only, avoiding the blanket spreading of chemicals. The aim of this technology is to reduce variation in the field, and it is said to bring financial savings to the farmer as well as environmental benefits by applying less chemicals. North-east Scotland (Aberdeenshire & Angus) is a region well known for the large-scale production of crops (particularly barley and potatoes) that make it an ideal region to study the adoption of variable rate precision farming technologies. The majority of farmers had adopted lime spreading by variable rate precision farming technology since the soil in this area tends to be acidic. The size and type of the farm suggest that it is large farms involved in arable or mixed farming that are more likely to adopt variable rate precision farming technologies. The main advisory suppliers for the uptake of this innovation were commercial and privately-owned companies offering advice and inputs alongside the initial soil mapping exercise. The high costs of machinery to implement variable rate precision farming means that smaller farms often forego the adoption of this technology.

CONTACTS:

Christina Noble
Christina.noble@hutton.ac.uk

COUNTRY/REGION:

United Kingdom

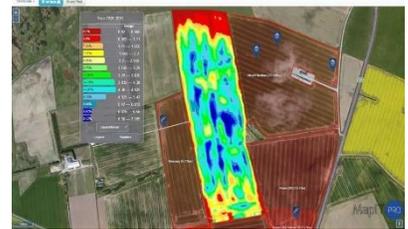
KEY WORDS:

#VariableRate,
#precisionfarming,
#technology, #north-eastScotland

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Looking ahead, farmers already adopting precision farming technologies identified the use of drones and electro-magnetic sensors for scanning crops to become more popular in this region.

For more information contact Christina Noble
christina.noble@hutton.ac.uk



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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www.agrilink2020.eu

twitter.com/agrilink2020

pierre.labarthe@inrae.fr

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>