New Project

FV 334

Perennial field margins with combined agronomical and ecological benefits for vegetable rotation schemes
Project Number: FV 334

Title: Perennial field margins with combined agronomical and ecological benefits for vegetable rotation schemes

Start and end dates: 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2013, 5 years

Project Leader: Prof. Felix Wackers

Project Co-ordinator: TBA

Location: STC (years 1–5); Grower sites in Lincolnshire, York, West Yorkshire (years 3–5)

Background and project objectives

Aim of Initiative: To develop species compositions for perennial field margins across a horticultural rotation that provide reliable and cost-effective pest control while maintaining crop yield and quality, combined with benefits in terms of with biodiversity and conservation. The final output will include recommendations for use and management of these field margins with a proposed goal of their inclusion in future Environmental Stewardship Options. A database will be set up to collate experience and knowledge from this and related functional biodiversity projects in order to make this information accessible to end-users. This will be achieved by the following objectives;

- Develop a seed mixture that has the potential to optimize conservation and biological control benefits while minimizing potential risks for vegetable rotation schemes.
- Assess the establishment as well as flowering times of field margins and quantify their impact on biological control agents, pests, pollinators and farmland birds.
- Develop the use of flowering field margins as part of a pesticide assisted trap cropping approach
- Support predator population build-up through provision of non-pest prey in field margins
- Develop use of banker plants in field margins as sentinels to monitor levels of biological control agents
- Develop a database on the compatibility of available chemical control options with various biological control agents to optimize integrated pest management decisions
- Quantify the impact of perennial field margins on pest levels, crop quantity and quality and pest management costs
- Communicate best practice.
Further information

Email the HDC office (hdc@hdc.org.uk), quoting your HDC number, alternatively contact the HDC at the address below.

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