



Practice Abstract N° 17

Needs, barriers, gaps and opportunities for weed management in Europe

INTRODUCTION

To better understand the challenges and opportunities in agroecological weed management (AWM), we conducted interviews and questionnaires across multiple Living Labs with stakeholders, including farmers, researchers, advisors, policymakers, consumers and industry representatives. This analysis aimed to identify key needs, existing barriers, knowledge gaps, and opportunities for advancing sustainable weed management practices based on agroecological principles.

MAIN RESULTS – OUTCOMES

The results are aggregated across the Living Labs to show the key needs, barriers, gaps and opportunities for agroecological weed management in Europe.

Key findings



NEEDS

- Training & education
- Technical solutions
- New policies
- Extension services
- Funding & labor



OPPORTUNITIES

- New business models
- Implementation of IPM
- Ecosystem services
- Peer-to-peer knowledge
- Reduction of reliance on herbicides



BARRIERS

- Regulatory challenges
- Climate change
- Changes in weed flora & invasive species
- Lack of funding & low consumer awareness
- Complexity & time consuming



GAPS

- Lack of knowledge & practical experience
- Lack of labor
- Lack of incentives-subsidies
- Cost of applications-machinery
- Changes in farmers' habits

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhance farmer training & knowledge sharing through (1) peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge, (2) demonstration events showcasing successful AWM strategies, (3) hands-on programs
- Foster innovation & research on AWM through the (1) active involvement of farmers into the research part, (2) monitoring of sustainability dimensions, (3) exploration of combinations of practices, (4) new business models
- Advocate for economic incentives & policy support to boost market acceptance and make resilient systems
- Participate in Living Labs and other collaboration networks to co-create solutions that are tailor-made to your region and farming system


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