

Functional agrobiodiversity in apple pest management in Latvia — what do we know

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Functional agrobiodiversity (FAB) and its management techniques become more and more popular in agriculture to obtain sustainable ecosystem services as for example pest management. Perennial crops are very suitable for implementation of sustainable FAB techniques. The one of aims of the CORE Organic Plus project EcoOrchard is to collect the existing information about FAB and its management techniques to improve and exchange knowledge and practical experience between scientists, advisors and owners of apple orchards. To fulfil this aim many advisors and farmers have been interviewed in nine European countries including Latvia. As the term FAB is new in Latvia, information regarding its techniques and their use in Latvia were also searched in other sources like existing rules and regulations and extension materials for farmers. We have found that some FAB techniques are already used for pest management in apple orchards in Latvia and that most of them are natural elements in the orchards or implemented because of other aims. Farmers in Latvia do not acknowledge the fact that some techniques they use are FAB related, and they do not evaluate the efficacy of these techniques for FAB. The EcoOrchard project will test methods for FAB assessment with growers, also in Latvia, and provide growers and advisory service in Latvia access to more information and information exchange about FAB.

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