



IPM adoption in my hub

Facilitation approach and progress made in IPM adoption



ProAgria

My group



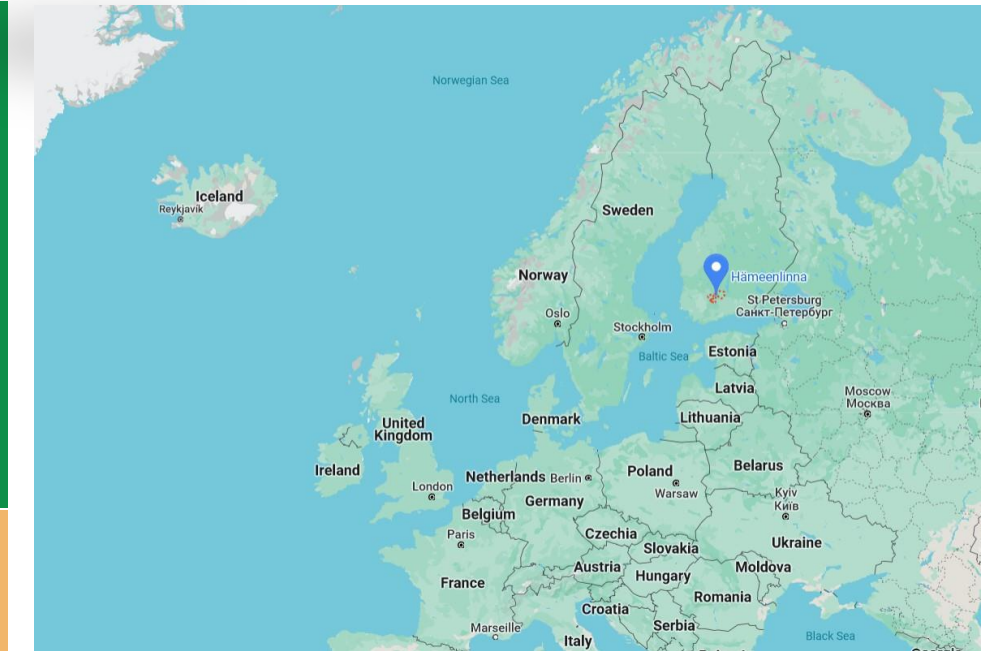
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PRESENTATION OF THE HUB COACH ORGANISATION

The hub is coordinated by Marja Kallela, ProAgria Southern Finland, which is the Rural Advisory Centre located in Southern Finland.

THE HUB

Our hub consists of 11 horticultural farms, which are located in Kanta-Häme, Päijät-Häme and Pirkanmaa. The farms are located within a maximum distance of 70 km from Hämeenlinna. The farms are two conventional outdoor vegetable farms (onion, podpea), one outdoor organic vegetable farm, two organic small fruit farms, two conventional open field soft fruit farms, two polytunnel soft fruit farms, one apple farm and one cut rose farm.



OBJECTIVES AND MOTIVATIONS OF THE FARMERS

Our farmers are interested in producing marketable yield in a economically and environmentally sustainable way.

DRIVERS

The farmers have a lack of plant protection chemicals. They have to find a way to cultivate without chemicals.

BARRIERS

New plant protection products come onto the market rarely. This is due to Finland's small market and strict legislation.
In public the use of chemicals raises general concerns about environmental protection.





IPM challenges and results

IPM Challenges

What were the main IPM challenges?

Variable conditions caused challenges.

Drought, wetness, and the resilience of crops against plant diseases and pests vary from one growing season to another.

There are no two identical growing seasons, but monitoring crop growth and weather forecasts provides essential information for successful cultivation.



The hub's results

What progress has the hub made on these challenges ?

Learning from each other has been key.

The exchange of information and discussions among farmers about their previous seasons' crop protection experiences have increased the entire group's knowledge of various crop protection options in both conventional and organic farming systems.

What issues still need to be addressed ?

How to obtain marketable yield in a situation where chemical control is not available and there is no alternative control method to combat against pests, for example in strawberries in a groundwater area.

How are the hub farmers going to proceed ?

After the project, local and EU-funding will be sought to continue farmer collaboration.

Specifically, funding is needed to address crop protection issues in soft fruit cultivation.

Key conclusions

The contribution of 'soft skills' to the hub and issue management

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods are evolving, and chemical-free crop protection is already in use because chemical pesticides are either unavailable or cannot be used every year.

More research on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for vegetables and soft fruits in Finnish conditions is needed to enable crop production even under changing climates, such as in conditions of extended daylight.

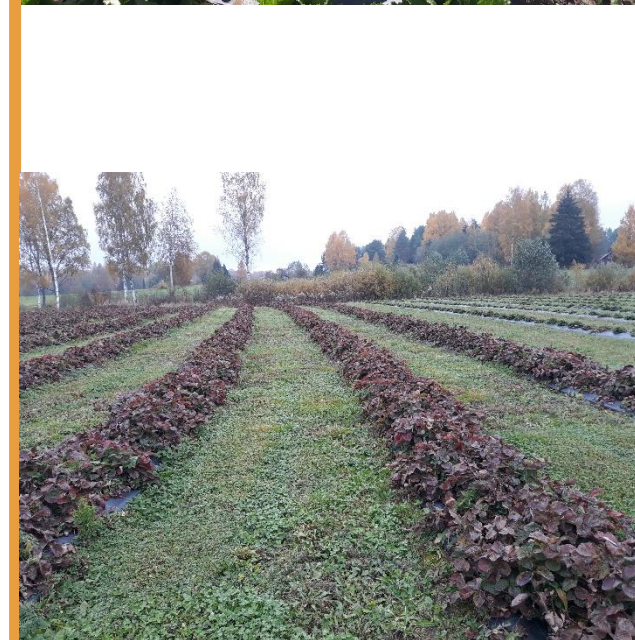
Facilitation approaches

What is the issue the hub work on more precisely?

In Finland, there are few horticultural farms. Farms producing the same plant are not very close to each other. That's why a hub was assembled from nearby berry and vegetable producers. Some of the hub's farms are in conventional production and some are organic.

How did you proceed? What did you do?

The aim was to find a program for demo events that would be of interest to multiple farmers. For example, topics of interest to polytunnel soft fruit growers included thrips management, growing substrates, oxygen utilization in cultivation, etc.



Individual facilitation

When participating in events at the hub farms, the threshold for meeting interesting people is lower than directly contacting another farmer.

Collective facilitation

Remote connections have facilitated organizing meetings both domestically and with European farmers.

Joint events

What conclusions can you draw?

All participating farmers use IPM methods and can therefore exchange related experiences.

My tips for making it work

The distances cannot be helped, but the interesting topics of Open Field Day events motivate farmers to travel longer distances to gain additional information and meet each other.

IPM adoption & pesticide use



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Finnish farmers have been implementing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for over 10 years, provided they have made a CAP environmental commitment. Targeted pest control according to demonstrated need has become established practice.

Marja Kallela

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In a changing climate, with a decrease in chemical crop protection agents, producing marketable yields is challenging. Attention has been focused on holistic farming practices during the IPMWORKS project, aiming to bring high-quality produce to market. Integrated Crop Management (ICM) as part of holistic farming includes soil health, water management, crop rotation, sustainable varieties, and pest control measures based on monitoring and identified needs.

