



NATIONAL WORKSHOPS REPORT TEMPLATE

IPMWORKS National Workshop *United Kingdom*

Date: 29/02/24

Place: Online

Type: video conference

National Focal Point for UK: Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF)

Reporting person for this meeting: Megan Whatty

Participants:

List with Name, position and affiliation of each participant

- Megan Whatty, IFM Technical Coordinator, LEAF
- Andrew Christie, Hub Coach, James Hutton Institute
- Graham Begg, IPM Works project member, James Hutton Institute
- Tom Clark, farmer, hub member
- Celine Delabre, Agricultural Ecologist, Nature Scot
- Amy Geddes, Chair of the Scottish Voluntary Initiative
- Adrian James, Knowledge Exchange Manager, Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB)
- Dave Bell, Senior Consultant, SRUC
- Darell Crothers, Senior Policy Officer, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Philippa Dodds, Head of Agronomy, Angus Growers
- Adam Christie, Managing Director, Scottish Agronomy
- Neil Evans, Director of Operations, Voluntary Initiative

1. Agenda

The NFPs will reflect the agenda of the National Workshop in this section.

The proposed agenda is reflected below. NFPs are free to adapt it according to local specificities, but it should at least include the following points:

a) Introduction of IPMWORKS network and methodology.

b) Save the date – IPM Conference 2024, Holistic IPM: Reducing Pesticide Use.

Present the IPM Conference 2024, jointly organised by IPMWORKS and IPM Decisions in Brussels, 14th May 2024.

c) Session 1: Validation of the IPMWORKS recommendations for scaling IPM adoption through IPM demo networks in the AKIS.

Task 1.5: Recommendations for scaling IPM adoption through IPM demo networks in the AKIS.

The aim of this session is to refine the strategies for expanding the adoption of IPM within IPM demonstration networks operating within the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS).

d) Presentation: IPM WORKS survey #1 data – Graham Begg (JHI)

- a. Overview of survey data and introduction to the worksheet which JHI has developed to present survey data.

e) Session 2: IPMWORKS strategy for Long Term Sustainability.

Task 7.1: Establish an IPM Network of engaged policy makers across Europe.

Task 7.3: Self sustainability of the networks.

The aim is to make the IPMWORKS network and methodology better known by stakeholders, to present the strategy for Long Term Sustainability, and to discuss about funding solutions for supporting IPMWORKS hubs after the end of the project.

NFPs will include an invitation to national stakeholders to visit an IPMWORKS demo farm before the end of the summer 2024 (if this type of visit has not already taken place at the national level). **Please, note that we will request feedback from you if the invitation was accepted by the stakeholders.**

f) Open forum for questions and discussions.

2. Outcomes on Session 1: Validation of the IPMWORKS recommendations

Indications from FEUGA:

- **What do we expect to get from the NFPs in this session?**

From this session we seek from the NFPs to collect the main ideas that arise during the discussion, especially in the Group Activity where we expect the facilitator to be attentive and vigilant to the ideas that arise and that may not be fully reflected in the answers of the post-its, as well as to note the attitude with which they face the dynamic.

Also, any other ideas that arise in the group that may contribute to the externalisation of the recommendations, a new idea or a common concern that the facilitator sees coming up repeatedly can be reflected in the report in the form of a free text.

- **Concepts to be reflected**

It is important that the answers to the questions asked during the group activities are well reflected. The facilitator can choose if he/she prefers the participants to answer the questions on post-its (in this case we need a translation of the post-its) or to collect the answers to each question in a document.

At the end of the presentation there is a final slide where the attendees' conclusions and final comments on all the information received should be collected by the facilitator in an open discussion.

- **Information to be provided**

On the other hand, we need a report from the facilitator with a description of the development of the workshop especially focused on the group activities, adding the answers to the questions and main comments of the session. There should be at least a detailed description of the discussion of each of the points exposed as well as a dedicated part for the Mentimeter activity.

- **Minimum number of words:** 1.500 words.

Questions asked to attendees:

Q1: How can demo events and hubs further drive the adoption of IPM practices?

- This question was a bit generic and we did not have any **direct** answers. However, many of the other answers were relevant.

Q2: What are the main barriers you identify to scale up the IPM Works methodology?

- Economic constraints of the trials/interventions themselves, for example seed costs for wildflower strips and taking land out of production have an economic penalty to the farmer.
- A key barrier for many farmers who are looking to set up a hub/cluster group is funding for a facilitator. Both in terms of identifying accessible funding, but also the challenges of applying for funding. For example, some funding pots cannot be applied for by a single person, they must be applied for by an organisation, which can make them inaccessible to farmers unless they form a legal entity.

- Making sure that the information generated within a hub is transferred to the wider industry rather than just staying within small groups is a challenge. For example, finding the time/connections to write up summary reports of trials, or using social media to promote the work of the group.
- Business competition is an issue between farms which are supplying into the same markets. This can mean they are less willing to share knowledge and data with competitors. This is particularly an issue within the horticultural sector in the UK, where high value crops (field veg, soft fruit etc) are grown by a reduced number of growers who are all directly competing with each other.
- The length of time that funding is available was flagged as a potential issue. For example in the UK a separate project has gained funding for cluster groups through working with GWCT and Pepsico (collaboration between an NGO and a corporate sponsor), however this funding only lasts two years.

Q3. How should the hubs be adapted to address challenges in your local context?

- Peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and training will play a big role in future government policy. So the format/structure of the IPM WORKS project should hopefully be supported in future, but with the current ongoing agricultural reforms, we do not know when this funding/policy will be released.
- Where there are common crops between different farming systems (for example cereal crops which are grown widely but for different end markets), industry could be approached to form and fund working groups. However, a challenge with industry-linked projects can be data accessibility, as if a business is funding a piece of work, they may want to keep the data non-public so that it is only of benefit to their business.
- Having hubs which are themed on agricultural issues e.g. irrigation, climate resilience, disease management, which are open to all sectors, rather than just to one crop type, can help reduce the issue of growers not wanting to share knowledge/data with direct competitors within their sector.
- A farmer in the group stated “It would be good to see the groups expanded, or to cooperate with other existing groups such as the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) cluster farms, I would be interested myself in joining”.

Due to the type of attendees within the group and past experiences of using the platform in online workshops, it was decided that the Mentimeter activity would not work during this workshop, and so this activity was not carried out.

3. Outcomes on Session 2: IPMWORKS strategy for Long Term Sustainability

Indications from CONSULAI:

- **What do we expect to get from the NFPs in this session?**

NFPs are asked to meet with National Policy Network or their national/regional AKIS.

In this meeting, NFPs are asked to discuss national/regional funding opportunities for Hub Coaches and for the national networks after September 2024. NFPs are also asked to understand if there are already some similar initiatives at national/regional level and if they could run alongside the IPM hubs.

NFPs should also influence national/regional policy makers to develop new policies to support hub coaches in achieving funding for their activities.

After these meetings, NFPs will be asked to report back these opportunities to CONSULAI (via reporting template), as well as to their national hubs, supporting them in their efforts to find funding.

- **Concepts to be reflected**

Opportunities for funding for the Hubs after the end of the project (Sept 2024) should be identified and shared with Hub Coaches so they can prepare their own sustainability strategies.

NFPs can also identify similar existing initiatives at national level, as well as influence national/regional policy makers to develop new policies to support hub coaches in achieving funding for their activities.

These meetings should be organised jointly with Hub Coaches to allow them to share experiences and network with the Policy Network/AKIS.

- **Information to be provided**

Country: **UK**

Date of meeting: **29/02/24**

Number of attendees: **12**

Typology of attendees (Policy, Science, Society): **Policy and industry**

Level of action of attendees (European, national, regional): **National and regional**

Types of funding identified:

- The Scottish government are currently in the process of reforming their agricultural policies, many of which have not been made public. A government official in the meeting stated that they are exploring a 'facilitation fund' which could be used to fund a persons time to coordinate knowledge exchange groups for farmers. She is going to keep the workshop organisers updated on this opportunity as it develops.
- The Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB) has a number of full-time staff coordinating knowledge exchange activities in the UK, whose wages are paid through a levy fee paid by growers. After the workshop, one of the AHDB knowledge exchange managers for cereals has volunteered to be a future hub coach, giving his time in-kind (free of charge) to facilitate a future arable hub.

- If government funding is not available, private funding, for example through suppliers was highlighted as an option. However, it takes a lot of work to convince commercial entities to fund projects, for example you need to prove what the benefit will be to their business, not just to the wider industry. There has been a mindset change that farmers are now being viewed as part of the solution, not part of the problem, but you need to have a very clearly defined goal to convince end-users to fund activities.

National/regional initiatives identified:

- The IPM NET project, which is led by ADAS, was identified as a potential route for hub members to stay engaged. This is a new project which aims to form a knowledge exchange hub of arable farmers who are practicing IPM. Farmers will attend projects meetings and events and provide data which will be used for benchmarking and to analyse how IPM practices are impacting farm yields, economics etc. This new project has now been advertised to the current UK hub members, many of whom have signed up to take part.
- Farm Advisory Service (FAS) Connect in Scotland is a new scheme which brings together farmers to tackle big problems with shared experience, ideas and knowledge. The scheme has a dedicated group of facilitators, who organise three meetings per year on topics decided by the group members.

Next steps:

- The meeting notes and power point slides have been shared with attendees, alongside the contact details of the UK hub coach.
 - The knowledge exchange manager who volunteered his time to be a future hub coach will be looped into conversations over the coming months, to plan how we can continue the work of the project.
 - The James Hutton Institute is going to look into how the Farm Advisory Service could be used as a way to facilitate future hubs.
 - Tom Clark, one of the hub farmers, has invited Nature Scot (Scottish Governmental organisation responsible for the country's natural heritage) to visit his farm to see sustainable farming in practice and discuss the IPM Works project. This visit is now being arranged, likely for June.
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- **Minimum number of words:** 1.500 words

In this section, The **NFPs** will also report to **IAMZ-CIHEAM** on the invitation to national stakeholders to **visit an IPMWORKS demo farm.**

4. Outcomes on open discussion

The NFPs will reflect in this section the issues raised during the open forum for questions and discussion.

Topic 1 – How were farmers recruited into the project?

Feedback from group:

- Existing relationships through previous projects were used to choose previously engaged farmers, but also personal connections were key to building trust. Hub coach had a lot of local connections which were a great help.
- The hub farmers were all fairly geographically close and had same soil types and climates.
- Farmers in the hub were not overly risk-averse which helped the project
- Farmers in the group understood the challenges faced by climate change and how IPM measures (e.g. wildflower strips, cover crops) could have benefits in addition to pest control.

Topic 2 – Overview of current plans for Scottish agricultural policy

Feedback from group:

- Concerns over the use of the term ‘regenerative agriculture’ in future policy schemes – worried that it is an emotive term which can polarise farmers.
- Concerns over farmers rejecting sustainable agricultural policies and instead focusing purely on maximising outputs at the expense of the environment.
- James Hutton Institute has been asked to contribute to evidence collection on how sustainable/regenerative agriculture can impact agriculture. This will feed into future policy.

Topic 3 – Title of the issue

Conclusion:

Free text.