



Inspirational ideas: Landscape management to increase biodiversity

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<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news/inspirational-ideas-landscape-management-increase>

Geographical scope:

France

Keywords:

agroecology

[This inspirational idea is also available in a Slovak version.](#) [1]

Translation courtesy of the [National Rural Network Slovakia](#) [2]. Read more EIP-AGRI inspirational ideas in Slovak [on the NRN website](#) [3].

French farmers, beekeepers and agricultural students join forces to promote biodiversity

For the past three years, the Biodiversité project in the French region of Normandy has been working on biodiversity in agriculture. Farmers, beekeepers and students have joined forces to study the potential of increasing biodiversity on agricultural parcels by planting honey-producing flower strips.

“Boosting the presence of pollinators and other beneficial insects - that is the objective of our project. We want to achieve this by changing the landscape management in our arable farming area. These changes include for instance flowering strips, cover crops and hedges on the edge of the agricultural parcels”, says Audrey Hulmel, project leader of GIEE Biodiversité.

The idea for this project started when a local farmer heard about a beekeeper who had problems in finding farmers with oilseed rape parcels and sunflower fields to feed his 300 beehives. He decided to ask a beekeeper to put beehives next to his arable fields. Moreover, he also planted his first flower strips. As a member of the agricultural network Ecophyto, he asked the project leader to carry out a survey on the bee activity. The results of the survey showed that these flower strips didn't only serve pollinators, but also the farmer.

Audrey: “The honey-producing flower strips are easy to maintain. Moreover, they attract pollinators, because of the flowers, but also other insects like beetles and hoverflies. These insects eat slugs and aphids, which means that fewer pesticides are needed. Besides that, the flower strips can also help to prevent erosion. The idea was born to form a project group to promote biodiversity. With this project we have committed ourselves to evaluate the benefits of this type of management through surveys and observations.”

The group is led by cooperative Agrial and 8 of its farmer members. Also the apicultural union ACN is participating, federating more than 500 beekeepers. The students of a higher education school for

agriculture, Le Robillard, have been studying the pollinators and beneficial insects on the flower strips and the fields in the project.

After three years, the project has achieved interesting results. First, there is a total change in the way pests are managed. For instance, it is no longer necessary to use insecticides against pollen beetles. In addition, farmers now know better how to increase the population of beneficial insects by ploughing as little as possible and limiting the use of herbicides and harrowing or hoeing instead. "When it comes to the flower strips, we have discovered improved management techniques and a better selection of honey plants for the bees and other pollinators. First we only used Phacelia, sainfoin and buckwheat. Now we have added crimson clover, Persian clover, sweet clover, borage and vetch."

Farmers and beekeepers now understand each other's issues and goals, which leads to a better and more efficient partnership. However, in the future more research on biodiversity is needed because the beneficial effects of changes in landscape and crop management may only become apparent after 5 years or more. "In a few years, we might conduct more research on hedgerows. Hedgerows are closely interlinked with the flower strips and therefore important for the biodiversity", concludes Audrey.

If you would like to disseminate this inspirational idea in your own network, please have a look at [the full press article](#) [4], which includes a shorter version and pictures you can use.

Video of AGRI challenge - Increasing biodiversity in agricultural landscapes

[Agroecology at the heart of the discussions at the AIS 2019](#) [5]

Audrey's project is one of the projects which will be visited at the AIS 2019. Between 300 and 400 farmers, researchers, advisers, companies, associations and decision-makers will meet in Normandy on 25 and 26 June 2019 for the second European Agri Innovation Summit 2019 (AIS 2019) dedicated to the contribution of EIP-AGRI to the transition to agroecology. [Further information on the AIS 2019](#). [5]

Further reading:

[Agri-Innovation summit 2019](#) [6]

Links

[1] <http://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/sites/default/files/francuzibi.pdf>

[2] <http://www.nsrv.sk/>

[3] <http://www.nsrv.sk/?pl=93>

[4]

<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news-events/press-media/press-release/french-farmers-beekeepers-and-agricultural>

[5] <https://www.reseaurural.fr/Sommet-agri-innovation-2019>

[6] <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/event/agri-innovation-summit-2019>

