

# Farmers deserve credit for contributing to the weed surveys

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## Introduction

The PRODIVA project focuses on a better utilization of crop diversification for weed management in North European organic arable cropping systems. The goal is to maintain diverse arable weed vegetation that is manageable in the long run.

The PRODIVA partners co-operated with farmers and extension services in gathering information on current cropping practices and their influence on weed pressure and weed diversity.

Regional on-farm weed surveys were carried out in six countries around the Baltic Sea in 2015-2016. In addition to the composition of weed flora we were interested in possible knowledge gaps which may support experimental work on integrated weed management.

Weed species of common relevance to organic spring cereals may not always be present at experimental sites. Thus collaboration between farmers, extension services and research scientists was crucial in succeeding to compile information on important weed species. We collaborated with 7-20 farms per country and monitored the weed flora from more than 200 fields in total.

## Objectives

- Commit parties to national and international collaboration.
- Monitor the weed flora regionally around the Baltic Sea area.
- Link the weed infestation and agronomic detriment of weeds to the applied cropping measures on organic farms.
- Bridge the information from surveys with the research results. An in-depth discussion with farmers was included.
- Communicate with farmers and extension services about the results and recommendations for organic farming.

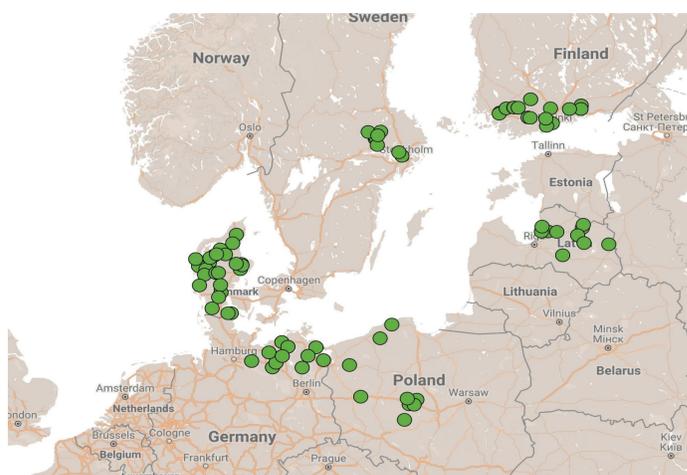


Fig. 1. Location of weed survey farms in six countries.

## Findings

- Easy to find potential survey farms with the help from the extension services and contacts from earlier studies.
- Farmers provided a great deal of information on their farming practices and weed management strategies. They had a profound awareness of their fields and challenges with weeds.
- Farmers seemed to appreciate studies in which the organic production system is the core issue and not just a subject of comparisons with conventional cropping.
- Many farmers were keen on joining research projects in which new solutions for weed management will be studied.
- The survey data will be processed by the German project partner. Preliminary results and feedback sent to farmers were highly appreciated. Regional success stories on weed management will be published in farmers magazines and at the project's web site.
- TAKE HOME: There lies a great potential in the involvement of farmers and their fields in crop protection research. Therefore, we gratefully acknowledge the smooth and valuable co-operation that we experienced with farmers.

## Project details

The PRODIVA project is funded by Core Organic Plus (ERA-NET).

Web site: <http://coreorganicplus.org/research-projects/prodiva/>

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