

Mechanical weeding

Goal

Significant reduce of the impact of agrochemicals on biodiversity.

Short description of the measure

Mechanical weeding is a non-chemical alternative used by farmers to avoid plants' resistance to chemical molecules, or to avoid a farming input that is progressively becoming more expensive. Actually, organic farmers do manage the weeds mechanically in a successful way. However, mechanical weeding is not exclusively restricted to organic farmers. Some conventional farmers apply pesticides for insect and/or fungicide treatment but prefer to skip chemicals for weeding. By definition, herbicides affect species diversity at least in the area where they are applied and beyond if application is imprecise or the products mobile.

Timeframe

(When to start a measure and anticipated time for implementation)

Permanent Action.

How auditors can assess if the measure has been implemented in a good quality?

- An Integrated Weed Management Plan supported by technicians is a good sign of implementation.
- Mechanical weeding actions are included in the Farm Register Book.



Pic. 1: Mechanical weeding (left) is an example of a good measure. Pic. 2: (right) pesticide drift, a bad example of weeding.

Additional information the auditor need for verification (if any)

Farm Register Book.

Effects on biodiversity

(ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)



Avoid negative impact of pesticides on non-target terrestrial plants.



Promotion of herbivorous insects and pollinators.

	 <p>Source of food and shelter for birds while the weeds are present.</p>
	 <p>Preservation of the soil microbiota.</p>
Indicator/key data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Surface of farm without herbicides treatments. ▪ Number of herbicides treatments substituted by mechanical weeding.
Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weeding - strategies, tools and technologies for sustainable weed management. https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/210490_en.html ▪ Alternatives to herbicide use in weed management – The case of glyphosate www.greens-efa.eu/files/doc/docs/Ofd517cb3f95312725a003242b2ba9d0.pdf ▪ The impact of agricultural practices on biodiversity Alison McLaughlin a, Pierre Mineau b,* 'Sagittaria Ecological Services, /-43 Rue Laurier, Hull, Que. JBX 3W4, Canada"National Wildlife Research Centre, Canadian Wildlife Service, JOO Blvd. Gamelin, Hull, Que. KIA 0H3, Canad ELSEVIER Agriculture. Ecosystems and Environment 55 (1995) 201-212 ▪ Effects of Herbicides on Non-Target Terrestrial Plants. Beate Strandberg * 1 , Céline Boutin 2 , Solvejg K. Mathiassen 3 , Christian Damgaard 1 , Yoko L. Dupont 1 , David J. Carpenter 2 , Per Kudsk 31 Department of Bioscience, Aarhus University, Vejlsøvej 25, Denmark

Further information: [Knowledge Pool](#)

This Action Fact Sheet belongs to the training package for auditors of standard organisations and companies and was developed within the project LIFE Food & Biodiversity (Biodiversity in Standards and Labels of for the Food Industry). The main objective of the project is to improve the biodiversity performance of standards and sourcing requirements in the food industry by helping standard organisations to integrate efficient biodiversity criteria into their schemes and motivating food processing companies and retailers to include comprehensive biodiversity criteria into their sourcing guidelines.

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