

Activities

- Regular engagement with growers, including reviewing current/historical crop planning, monitoring crops and production practices, soil and crop sampling, quality factors and handling.
- Green manure trials were carried out on one mixed farm trialling various short-term mixes e.g., rye/phacelia and clover/ryegrass.
- Market research on growth opportunities for the Irish organic vegetable sector and assessing the existing and future needs of growers to capitalise on them.

Further details



Total budget: € 597.416,00

Total financed: € 597.416,00

Main funding source: Rural development 2014-2020 for Operational Groups

Rural Development Programme: Rural Development Programme (National) - Ireland



Ended, 2018 - 2021



Athlone, Ireland



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MOPS

Maximising Organic Production Systems



Objectives

- Creating and carrying out individual organic cropping plans among growers.
- Conducting green manure trials to improve sustainable practices and lessen dependency on imported nutrients.
- Establishing and stimulating new and existing organic horticulture market demands and requirements in the retail sector.
- Increasing the capacity of participating farms and the Irish organic horticulture industry as a whole.

Green Manure trail



Organic produce from participating growers



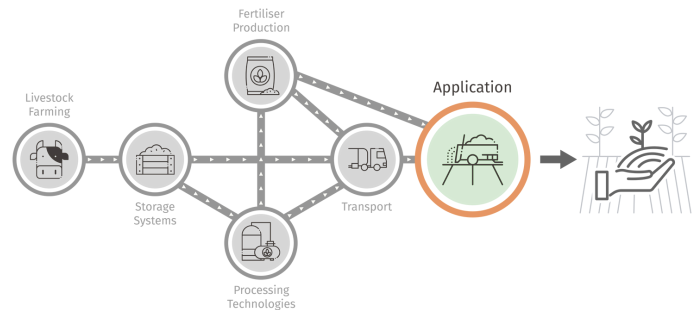
Results

- Over 3 years green manure trials (summer and winter) showed positive agronomic effects for successive cash crops, with increased soil nutrient concentrations, more beneficial insects, greater functional soil diversity, greater soil organic matter and improved weed control.
- Participating growers made better use of organic material as part of their soil and nutrient management. They also streamlined their crop selection and achieved increased efficiencies through optimised production as a result of greater specialisation.
- The participating farms benefited from a peer-to-peer learning exchange, including opportunities to increase business flexibility and resilience, e.g. by establishing new market routes due to COVID-19, proactively responding to the implications of Brexit
- By 2021, trade and cooperative ties between the growers in the project as well as growers in other parts of the island expanded and matured significantly

Context

Like other European countries, commercial organic horticulture is growing. Organic horticulture growers use a variety of channels to market and sell their products. However, domestic output is insufficient to meet the high demand for organic fruits and vegetables.

Location in the Nutri-Know value chain



Maximising
Organic
Production
Systems

There are several obstacles to grow and develop sustainably and in larger volumes. The challenges include finding suitable land, labour costs, and minimising costs to respond to seasonality and weather pressures while ensuring a steady supply throughout the year. To this end, in partnership with organic growers and other stakeholders, the Irish Organic Association sought to build grower-focused collaborative solutions to increase and optimise the supply of fresh Irish-grown organic horticultural produce nationwide.



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