



AGROECOLOGY FOR WEEDS

## Practice Abstract N° 28

## Challenges and Opportunities for Agroecological Weed Management in Apple Orchards in Galicia (NW Spain)

### INTRODUCTION

Apple production is widespread across the European Union. In Spain, apple orchards account for approximately 5.8% of the total fruit-growing area, with 4,395 hectares located in Galicia (NW Spain) as of 2022. Given the importance of this crop in the region, identifying the needs, barriers, gaps, and opportunities for agroecological weed management is key to advancing sustainable practices, boosting ecological resilience, and lowering synthetic herbicide use. In this context, 16 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders including farmers, researchers and advisors within the framework of the apple Living Lab of Galicia, aiming to gather insights and perspectives on current agroecological weed management practices and future strategies.

### MAIN RESULTS – OUTCOMES

NEEDS	BARRIERS	GAPS	OPPORTUNITIES
Technical solutions	Lack funding	Lack of knowledge and practical experience	Ecosystem services provision
Training and education	Complexity and time consuming	Lack of incentives-subsidies	Economical-business aspects
Scientific knowledge	Lack of professionalization	Low ratio of organic farms	IPM fostering
Value chain development	High carbon footprint and environmental impact	Lack of economic innovation strategies Lack of labour	Reduction of herbicide reliance Farmers professionalization

### PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhance training and knowledge transfer to support farmers in agroecological weed management.
- Promote investment and economic incentives to adopt sustainable and low-impact practices.
- Foster collaboration and professionalization across the value chain to reduce herbicide reliance.



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