Innovative IPM for Winter Wheat-based Rotations: First Results of ex post Sustainability Assessment of Cropping Systems Tested at INRA (France)

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Within the context of the PURE project (WP2), innovative IPM cropping systems were designed for winter wheat-based rotations in the Paris basin area, at INRA in France. We used a three-step prototyping method to design the cropping systems: (1) crop successions and agricultural practices were defined for each system, (2) the prototypes were ex ante assessed and, (3) the most promising systems were tested in field trials and ex post assessed.

Here, we presented results of the ex post sustainability assessment after one complete rotation.

After one complete rotation, all cropping systems achieve a "high" score (4/5) in terms of overall sustainability. However, this result is obtained by very different combinations of performances on the three sustainability pillars:
- economical pillar is higher in the C.S.,
- environmental pillar is higher in the A.S.

The social sustainability has remained medium (3/5) for all systems.

There is a clear hierarchy between these systems in terms of the environmental sustainability, which can be explained by various uses of pesticides. TFI are as follows: C.S. = 4.71, I.S. = 1.79, A.S. = 0.98.

In the C.S., high level of pesticide use led to a decline in all subcomponents of the environmental sustainability. On the contrary, in the A.S. (i.e. without any pesticide), environmental performances are judged very high.

Combining innovative strategies in the I.S. and A.S. (i.e. high diversity of species sown in the rotation, the use of resistant variety mixtures, high seed density and delayed sowing dates) led to a decrease of pesticide applications and to an improvement of the environmental performances.

DISCUSSION – CONCLUSION

Performance results show that it is difficult to meet various objectives. In the C.S., economical performances are high (i.e. high yields, and good produce quality) while environmental performances are judged as medium (i.e. high pesticide use). In the A.S., the performances are the opposite of the C.S. results and are explained by medium yields, with low produce quality, and no pesticide use.

Main results of ex ante and ex post sustainability assessments of the three cropping systems are close to each other. Therefore, DEXIPM seems to be a relevant tool to perform initial assessments required during the innovative cropping system design processes.

REFERENCES

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