

Embracing Integrated Pest Management Case studies



As the climate changes and biodiversity declines, adopting a holistic approach to pest management is essential.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) provides a comprehensive, whole-farm strategy to address pest, weed, and disease pressures. By taking simple steps to reduce reliance on chemicals, farmers can produce nutritious food, raise healthy livestock, and support resilient ecosystems.

Here are two case studies of farmers transitioning to an IPM system.



Barley yellow dwarf virus

IPM in action at Home Farm, West Sussex

Farm size: 500 hectares

Farm type: Arable

For James Baird, nature-friendly farming means undoing the damage done to nature caused by decades of intensive farming. This involves studying the history of his land, located between Littlehampton and Bognor Regis in South East England, and working to restore its original state.

Despite this, James describes himself as “a fairly hard-nosed arable farmer” and was initially sceptical that predatory insects could protect crops from disease and pests. However, his views changed dramatically, when nature saved his wheat from barley yellow dwarf virus (BYDV).

He recalls: “One autumn was so wet we couldn’t get onto the fields. The wheat was unprotected and aphids were spreading. We couldn’t do anything about it.

“By the following May or June, when BYDV symptoms usually appear, we noticed something incredible. Near the hedgerows, the fields were all bright green, with no sign of infection, up to 12 metres into the field.

“The beneficial predators had come from the hedgerows. It was absolutely astonishing. That moment opened my eyes to just how much hedges and nature can offer farmers. It had a profound impact on me.”

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James Baird



IPM in action at Neidpath Farms, Scotland

Farm size: 2,500 acres

Farm type: Livestock

At Neidpath Farms, a large upland operation in Peebles, the Scottish Borders, manager Matt Griffin has introduced several Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies to benefit both finances and the environment.

One notable change has been the gradual reduction of wormers and organophosphate dips for livestock. This has led to stronger immune systems in his cattle and sheep, improved soil health, and the recovery of the dung beetle. The dung beetle also plays its part in IPM as it helps control livestock parasites and pest flies by quickly removing and burying dung.



Matt Griffin
Photo: Joanne Coates

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Matt Griffin

In addition, Matt is incorporating IPM principles to his plans for landscape-scale tree planting. “I want every field to have trees with medicinal properties available for grazing,” he says. “Blood tests showed that our animals’ mineral levels weren’t what I wanted them to be. It made me question why we rely on boluses, while the deer on the estate are healthy and thriving without any treatment.

“Trees like willow are rich in cobalt and zinc - exactly what our sheep are lacking. If we can let our animals graze on these trees year-round, I’m hopeful we can eliminate this costly and time-consuming intervention.”

The concept of IPM aligns closely with Matt’s principles, which he developed while training in holistic management in New Zealand. “When we try to mimic nature, everything falls into place,” he concludes.

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