

FARMING MATTERS

Insects on
a farm

Friends
or
foes?

■ Insect conservation ■ Preparing for Rio+20

■ A new section on agro-biodiversity



Agrobiodiversity @knowledged

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Farming practices which use and enhance biodiversity are common, yet agriculture can also be the greatest threat to biodiversity. Hivos and Oxfam Novib have started a programme that aims to develop the concepts and ideas concerning agricultural biodiversity, small-scale farming, rural livelihoods and climate change. This is the first of a series of articles presenting the results.



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Managing for higher yields

Farmers in Florida have broadened their IPM efforts by not only focusing on those species we recognise as pests, nor only on the (reduced) use of pesticides. Those who have expanded their "management" activities, and are attracting beneficial insects to assist them with the pollination of their crops, can, as a result, benefit enormously.



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"We need to convince civil society..."

Later this year the world's gaze will return to Brazil for the Rio+20 Conference. Will the event have any positive results? Jean Marc von der Weid is somewhat sceptical. While not believing that there will be positive outcomes from the official meeting, he does believe in the political impacts of civil society mobilisation on international public opinion, and on the positive effects this can have in the medium to long term.



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Insect conservation in the U.K.

Relatively few insect species cause damage to crops, whereas many more are beneficial predating or parasitising crop pests, pollinating crops, breaking down organic matter (so helping nutrient recycling) and acting as prey for other wildlife, especially birds. With so many potential benefits, how can we enhance their presence? Farmers and researchers in central England have identified four essential requirements.