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Plant diversity and land use under organic and conventional agriculture: a whole-farm approach.

Gibson RH, Pearce S, ..., Symondson WOC, Memmott J

J Appl Ecol 2007 **44**: 792-803 [full text]

Selected by | Niklaus Ammann

Evaluated 5 Jul 2007

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Faculty Member

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PLANT BIOLOGY

New Finding

Comments

In this study, the authors carried out a whole-farm comparison of 10 organic and 10 conventional farms in a complex landscape in the southwest of England, measuring plant abundance, species richness and diversity in relation to all crop and non-crop landscape elements. Organic farms were shown to have a greater total area of semi-natural habitat, (e.g. woodland, field margins and hedgerows) and also to have a greater number of continuous blocks of woodland; however, the abundance, richness and diversity of plants in the semi-natural habitats on organic farms was not shown to be higher than those found on conventional farms - this despite commonly accepted expectations. These results show that the adoption of some organic management practices at the field scale (e.g. exclusion of synthetic herbicides) may enable conventional farmers to attain greater plant diversity within the arable field environment without requiring whole-farm conversion to organic practice.

Competing interests: None declared

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