Insect Responsible Sourcing Regions

LIFE IRSR

Insect-Responsible Sourcing Regions

Notice Board 2025

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With financial support from

Cooperation Partners

The EU LIFE project “Insect Responsible Sourcing Regions” has a volume of 3.4 million euros. The costs are 55 % funded by the European Commission’s LIFE environmental programme.

Problem and solution approach

Dramatic loss of insects in Germany and the EU:

- 76.7 % loss of insect biomass
- 90 % of the areas analysed were protected areas with intensive agriculture in the vicinity
- Global study → 40 % of insect species under threat

What is the main focus to counteract the loss of insects?

- Farmers and food companies → Initiatives to promote pollinators
- Sustainable agricultural practices
- Expertise of farmers and food companies → Implementation of measures - especially in insect protection

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LIFE IRSR - Our goals

1) Regional alliance for the promotion of insects

Creation and implementation of regional strategies and biodiversity action plans to promote pollinating insects in agriculture and the food industry through cooperation with relevant stakeholders

2) Development and implementation of market-orientated approaches

Evaluation and commercialisation of the biodiversity performance of farmers along the value chain using the Biodiversity Performance Tool (BPT) to create an economic incentive for insect-friendly measures.

3) Strengthening insect expertise

Training of farmers and advisors through an online learning format as well as practical training and the provision of technical measures to improve insect diversity in agriculture.

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LIFE IRSR - Our goals

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4) Evaluation and improvement of existing agricultural policy measures

Evaluation of the effectiveness of current agri-environmental measures under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with the aim of identifying shortcomings and developing proposals for improvements

5) Implementation of Citizen Science Modules (CSM)

Introduction and utilisation of CSM for monitoring insect populations in IRSR (MonVIA (Thünen Institute) and iNaturalist), including training of relevant stakeholders to implement and evaluate these monitoring projects

LIFE IRSR - Our goals

6) Development and implementation of a marketing and communication strategy

Identification of consumer segments and development of a strategy to promote demand for insect-friendly products and raise consumer awareness of the importance of insect conservation in agriculture

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Project impacts

More than 1,5300 people were trained, including representatives of local authorities and forestry administrations as well as numerous farmers and advisors. In seven insect-promoting regions (Allgäu, Lake Constance, Bliesgau, Hohenlohe, Northern Upper Rhine, Wendland and Vinschgau/South Tyrol), measures were implemented by more than 60 agricultural demonstration farms.

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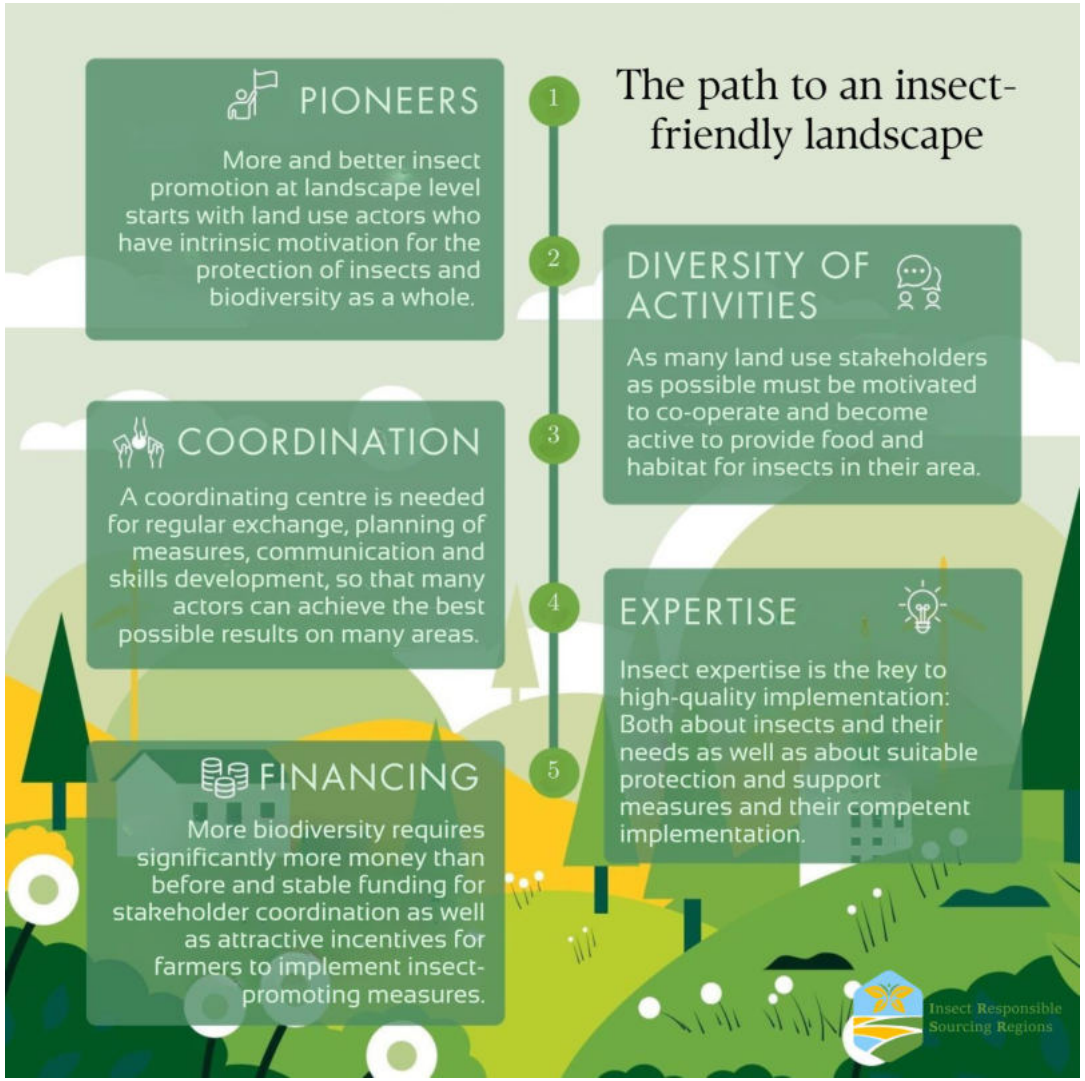
Key success factors

The IRSR project has identified the crucial prerequisites to pave the way to an insect-friendly landscape. Pioneers and different groups of stakeholders are crucial for promoting insects, ideally working together in a well-coordinated manner. High quality implementation in the landscape requires expertise and knowledge transfer. And finally, money is needed for all of this – ideally, public and private funds can be combined into an investment in regional biodiversity.



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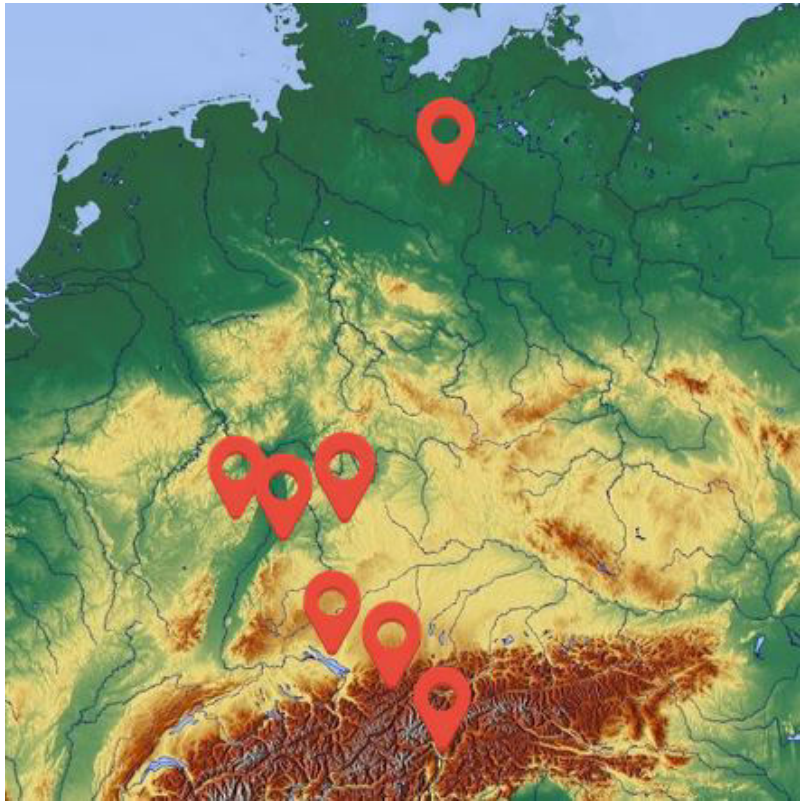
LIFE IRSR - Regions and stakeholders



- Farmers & producer organisations
- Companies in the food industry
- Agricultural trade & cultivation associations
- Private nature conservation
- Food standards & quality labels
- Agricultural advisory organisations
- District offices and specialised administrations
- Cities and municipalities
- Other organisations and projects
- Beekeepers

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IRSR Allgäu

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9 demonstration farms

- Haymilk farm Assemann
- Philipp Heine
- Biolandhof Hold
- Höß company
- Demeterhof Lanquanz
- Biohof Samenfink
- The Topinambur manufactory
- Rehabilitation clinic Überruh
- Golfclub Waldegg-Wiggensbach e.V.

Measures

- Grassland species enrichment through mowing and seeding
- Grassland extensification
- Old grass strips
- Flowering areas and fallow land
- Species-rich fringes/buffer strips
- Insect-friendly mowing
- Extensive pasture
- Planting fruit trees
- Hedge planting
- Deadwood/sandbar/sandstone pile

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IRSR Allgäu

- Events
  - Annual grassland day on field trial area with offers for the general public and for agriculture and dairies
  - Online event for farmers: Biodiversity protection & biodiversity management in grassland
  - Target group-specific training courses and excursions
  - Lecture and field tour: Bees and agriculture
  - Regular lectures at agricultural colleges and agricultural high schools
  - Regular iNaturalist training courses e.g. at the Wangen State Garden Show
  - high-profile markets: PRIMAVERA Rose Festival and FutureUp Market
  - Events and Workshops for more flowers at Allgäu
- Development of regional funds for sustainable agriculture and insect promotion
- Expert monitoring of locust populations
- Ongoing dialogue with dairies and agricultural and nature conservation stakeholders
- Development of a herb trail with regular wild herb tours on a demonstration farm

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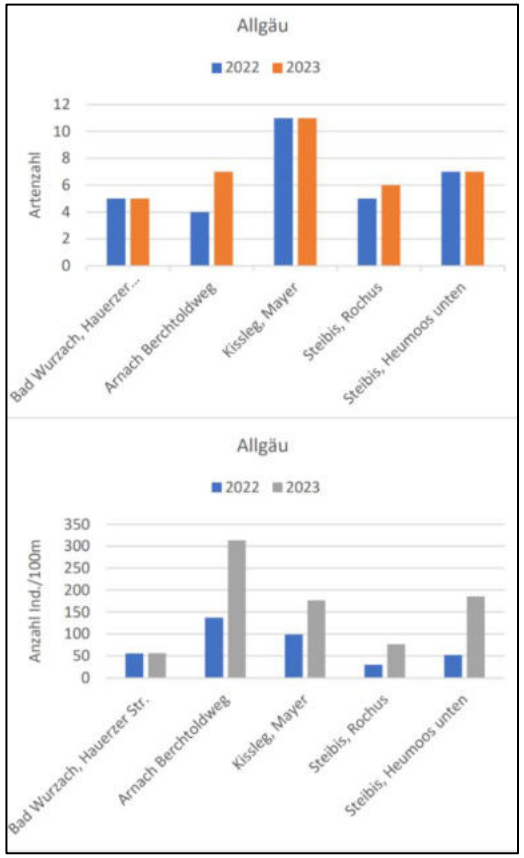
IRSR Allgäu - Key indicator species

Expert monitoring of grasshoppers in old grassland measures and without measures



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IRSR Bliesgau

9 demonstration companies

- Buchheit
- Schunk
- Erlenbacher Hof
- Hof Waldeck
- Kirchheimer Hof
- Schwartz
- Hassler
- Paltz
- Jakobi

Measures

- Perennial flowering areas
- Planting of individual trees/rows of trees
- Undersown crops in cereals
- Wide row in cereals
- Beneficial insect strips in large arable fields
- Maize and runner bean mix
- Lentil and yolk mixture
- Residual areas for beneficial organisms

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IRSR Bliesgau

- Training courses/workshops:
  - Insect-promoting measures in the agricultural landscape
  - Flowering areas in the agricultural landscape
  - Farmers and wild bees as a team
  - Recognising species-rich grassland
  - Farmer creates diversity
  - Concept of a regionally adapted flowering area measure
  - Insect watching with the app
- Expert monitoring: Requisite-orientated observation of wild bees on flowering areas

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IRSR Bliesgau – Key indicator species

Expert monitoring of flower strips with regard to wild bees: Expert monitoring on the perennial flowering strips led to the discovery of 33 wild bee species for the first time in Saarland.

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J. Kronenbitter / GNF

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IRSR Hohenlohe

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8 demonstration farms

- Company by Klaus Süpple
- Organic farm Franz
- Organic farm Stapf
- Bodensatz GbR
- D. and O. Weber GbR
- Eberhardt GbR
- Müller Stiftsgrundhof GbR
- Reber Innovative Agriculture

Measures

- Agroforestry
- Promotion of beneficial organisms
- Mixed cultivation
- Speciality crop cultivation (camelina, lavender)
- Undersown crops
- Direct sowing
- Perennial flower strips
- Flowering headland

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IRSR Hohenlohe

- Activities in cooperation with NABU and the town of Kirchberg
  - Building yard training + mulching/mowing concept
  - Explanatory sheet of the measures for the public
  - Insect-friendly design of communal areas
- Monitoring of wild bees
- Training in the field of ammen crops, diversification of maize cultivation and strip-till systems
- Citizen Science: iNaturalist App
- Field Days on topics such as Corn Nasturtium, Organic Strip-Till, Insect-friendly mowing, species-rich grasslands
- Online lecture on climate-resilient pasture management systems
- Training courses (2) Agricultural vocational school (conventional and organic)
- Lecture on light pollution

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IRSR Hohenlohe - Key indicator species

Expert monitoring of grasshoppers in unmown grass verges Measures

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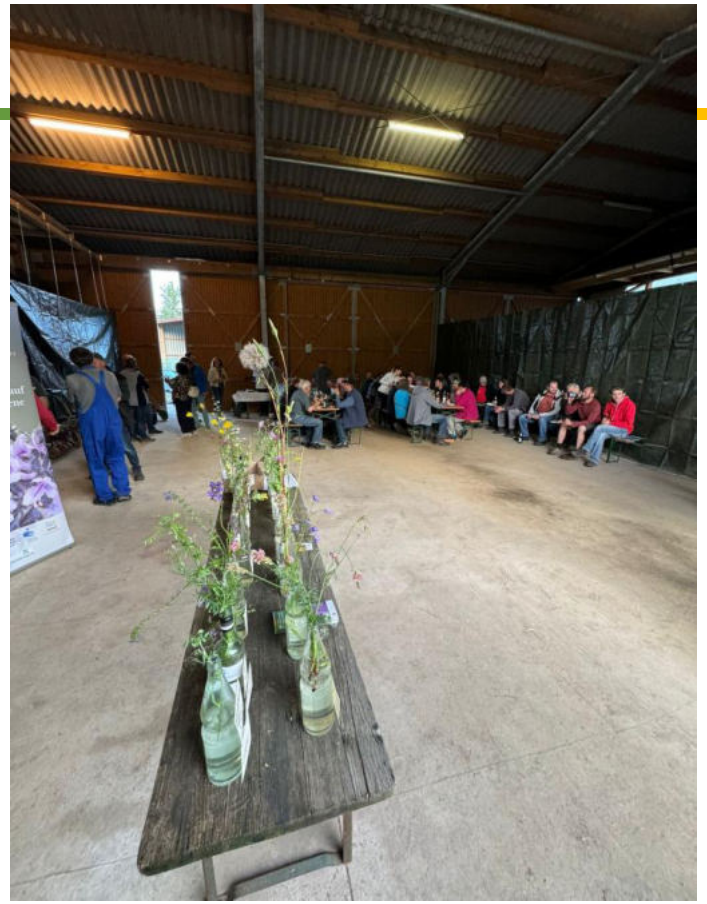

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IRSR Northern Upper Rhine

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9 demonstration farms

- Boxheimer arable farm
- Hartmann GbR arable farm
- Welk arable farm (accident, therefore unfortunately excluded from the project)
- Organic farm Schleinkhofer
- Grenzhof
- Rotthof
- Winery Markus Hafner
- Haghof
- Filsinger fruit farm

Measures

- Agroforestry
- Flowering tramlines
- Anchor plants in viticulture
- Beneficial insect strips
- Perennial flower strips

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IRSR Northern Upper Rhine

- Press relations (ongoing)
  - Specialist article on the commitment of the companies
  - Information for the general public
  - Citizens' article on concrete options for action in private gardens
- Tree planting in grassland
- Planting anchor plants in the vineyard (media tour)
- IFR Dinner/Harvest Thanksgiving → The company's own products produced in the region were savoured at a communal dinner
- Practical days for agricultural students
- Training for forestry and building yard employees
- Planning for area upgrades in public spaces
- Citizen-Science-Workshops

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IRSR Upper Rhine - key indicator species

Expert monitoring of flower strips with regard to wild bees
Expert reports have been able to detect 44 species of gymnosperms on beneficial flowering strips.

Monitoring of Aculeata in beneficial insect strips
Heidelberg-Wieblingen (Grenzhof) 2022:

44 species of aculeata were identified:
24 species of wild bees
13 species of spheciformes
3 species of vespidae
2 species of spider wasps
and one cuckoo wasp and one flower wasp species each

critically endangered
hedychrum nobile

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IRSR Vinschgau

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10 demonstration farms

- Englhof-Alexander Agethle
- Hausergut-Andreas Hauser
- Sockerhof-Anna Folie
- Sonnhöfl-Christine Viertler
- Gröbnerhof-Karl Raich
- Kartheingut-Elisabeth Tappeiner
- Building yard-Philipp Linser
- Telserhof -Werner Santer
- Theodor Niederfriniger
- Elmar Dietl

Measures

- Planting hedges
- Anchor plants
- Flower strips
- Flowering catch crops
- Flower strips in the fruit rows
- Natural pond

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IFR Vinschgau

- information events
- training courses on flower strips in fruit cultivation
- Networking meeting on autochthonous wild plant seeds with the district community
- Start of Alperia cooperation in January 2024
- Distribution of autochthonous anchor and hedge plants of the forestry station in May 2024
- Distribution of seeds for the flower strips in June 2024
- Creation of natural pond with training in June 2024
- First mowed material transfer on the Alperia area in July 2024

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IRSR Wendland

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8 demonstration farms

- Cord Günther Schulz
- T. Mennerich
- R & S GbR
- Schulze Rosche GbR
- Udo von der Höden
- Andreas Barge
- Hof Wenhold GbR
- Willi Schulz

Measures

- Fallow land for self-greening
- Annual flowering areas
- Planting of individual trees/rows of trees
- Winter catch crops
- Beneficial insect strips and beneficial insect areas
- Old grass strips
- Perennial flowering areas
- Wide row in cereals

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IRSR Wendland - Review

- Training for farmers on the species enrichment of grassland
  - 2 training courses on the identification of species-rich grassland in 2023
  - 2 further training courses on species-rich grassland in 2024
- Citizen science events to identify insects and plants in the field with the use of iNaturalist

- Monitoring:
  - Expert monitoring of beneficial insects in beneficial insect strips in parsley. Detection of ladybirds, hoverflies and lacewings using landing nets and yellow traps. Investigating whether the establishment of beneficial insect strips can reduce the use of pesticides.

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IRSR Wendland – Monitoring of beneficial insects

Common Lagoon Fly (Eristalinus sepulchralis)

Batman Hoverfly (Myiathropa florea)

Thick-legged Hoverfly (Syritta pipiens)

Fotos: Gerrit Öhm/ GNF

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IRSR Wendland – Key indicator species

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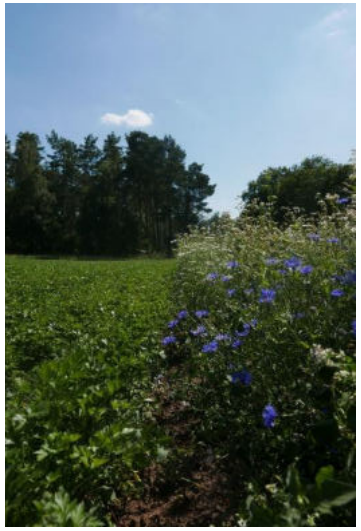
Expert monitoring of beneficial insect strips with regard to hoverflies, ladybirds and lacewings



Photos: Gerrit Öhm/ GNF

(C) O. Peters/ GNF

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Fallow land next to chives, photo: O. Peters / GNF

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IRSR Lake Constance

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8 demonstration farms

- Altschorenhof
- Berghof Tengen
- Buchhaldehof
- Fuchshof
- Highland Cattle Bodensee
- Moosfeld Gemüse GmbH
- Arnold fruit farm
- Meersburg State Winery

Measures

- Flowering undersow
- Corn and bean mixture
- Perennial flower strips
- Species-rich tramlines
- Extensive grassland
- Grassland with old grass strips
- Extensive grazing
- Insect-friendly shrubs, rock piles, deadwood piles, anchor plants, nesting aids

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IRSR Lake Constance

- More insect diversity in arable farming (online)
- Regional food with added value for nature (online)
- Seminar 'Insect-promoting region of Lake Constance' as part of the Nature Conservation Days at Lake Constance 2023
- Citizen Science workshops
- Field days
  - More insect diversity in viticulture - species-rich tramlines
  - Corn and runner bean mixture (for a vocational school class)
  - Undersown corn
- Information event for municupalities on extensive grazing

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IRSR Lake Constance - Key indicator species

Expert monitoring:

2022: Grasshoppers and butterflies on a flowering strip, five strips of old grassland and in species-rich, flowering tramlines in the vineyard as well as in unvegetated tramlines

2023: Wild bees in species-rich, flowering tramlines in the vineyard and in neighbouring, sown flowering areas

2024: Repetition of all mapping

→ In and around the vineyard, 50 species of wild bee species were detected in and around the vineyard, including 4 species on the Red List!

Photo: Wildfried Löderbusch

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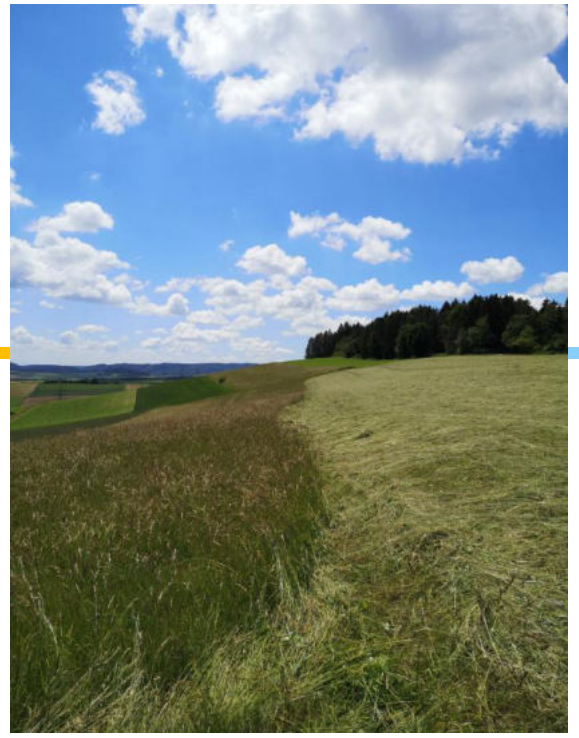
Foto: Christine Kahle



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IRSR Südpfalz

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7 demonstration farms

- Company Heid GbR
- Company K- Heid
- Company Jung
- Fohlenhof Fried
- Schick company
- Operation Eichenlaub
- Operation Mittenbühler

Measures

- Perennial flowering areas
- Annual beneficial insect strips
- Perennial beneficial insect strips
- Residual areas for beneficial organisms
- Maize and runner bean mixture
- Undersown crops in cereals
- Wide row in cereals

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IRSR Südpfalz

- Included in the project as a transfer region in February 2022
- In 2023, 90 wild bee species were documented
- In 2024, 87 wild bee species were found

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IRSR Südpfalz – Key indicator species

Expert monitoring of flower strips with regard to wild bees.

→ 90 bee species were counted in 2022 and 2023. In 2024, 87 wild bee species were found

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IRSR Guidelines

To maximise the project outreach, the IRSR project team published the “Guidelines for more and better insect promotion at landscape level. Recommendations for agriculture and forestry, local authorities and companies”.
Most of the measures presented have been tested in the IRSR. The aim was not only to disseminate established and proven measures to promote insects in agriculture, but also to test and strengthen the ecological effectiveness and practicability of more extensive cultivation practices. These experiences have been incorporated into the supplemented catalogue of measures.

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IRSR European conference 2025

- Around 80 participants from science, business, agriculture, administration and nature conservation
- Discussion of solutions for more and better insect support at landscape level
- Focus on the role of agriculture, municipalities, companies and citizens

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