

What funding is available for on-farm research and development around agroforestry?

UK EIP Operational Groups and Innovative Farmers



1. Operational Groups



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EIP-AGRI Operational Groups – basic principles

Operational Groups are intended to bring together multiple actors such as farmers, researchers, advisers, businesses, environmental groups, consumer interest groups or other NGOs to advance innovation in the agricultural and forestry sectors.

Types of projects

The types of projects or areas of action for Operational Groups can be very broad, but the project must contribute to the EIP-AGRI objective of promoting agricultural innovation that is more resource efficient, productive, low emission, climate-friendly, and resilient and that operates in harmony with the essential natural resources on which farming depends.

Relevant UK and EU Operational Groups



UK – WOOFs (WOODchip for Fertile Soil)



Portugal – GMOVEL. Weed control using chickens in vineyards, orchards and vegetable alley cropping together with meat and egg production. The chickens are confined to mobile parks protecting the crops.



Poland - The OG “Agroforestry in Zielawa Valley” investigating innovative models of herb production, processing and distribution in the following agroforestry systems: a) elderberry with pulmonaria and heath speedwell; b) rugosa rose and dog rose with cloudberry.



Spain – OG that aims to improve the conservation and recovery of chestnut habitats to improve the control of pests and diseases (e.g. root rot disease, chestnut blight and Asian chestnut gall wasps).



Belgium – group developing an innovative machine that places, fixes and wraps a weed suppressant canvas in vegetable and top fruit cropping systems.

WOODchip for Fertile Soils (WOOFS)

European Innovation Partnership
Operational Group



The European Agricultural
Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



Uncomposted (Ramial) Woodchip

- Fresh un-composted woodchip chipped when leaves off
- Smaller diameter material (<7cm)
- Smaller younger branches most nutritionally dense
- Previous research in Canada/ US positive results in terms of soil biological activity and SOM
- Very little further research



Operational Group Description

GROUP AIM: To increase the sustainability of farm systems by linking hedge management with soil improvement whilst providing an economic incentive for management of on-farm woody resources

Specific objectives

1. Determine whether applying woodchip (composted and un-composted) is beneficial to soil health and structure
2. Identify an efficient methodology to produce woodchip from hedgerows and other woody elements on farms and apply the material to soil; including a comparison of self-supply versus bought-in material
3. Produce guidelines for farmers on optimum application rates, time of application, stage in a rotation, species of tree, size of chip etc.



The European Agricultural
Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



WOOFS Trials

1. Wakelyns

Round 1: Trials set up in winter 2017/18 - 3 years of data.

Round 2: Set up winter 2018/19 - 2 years of data



2. Tolhurst Organics



Innovative Farmers Field Labs

- Peer to peer learning and experimentation
- Farmers set the priorities
- Supported by respected researchers
- Practical, intuitive, on-farm
- Multiple triallists – sharing risk, investment, learning amplified
- Small grants scheme up to £10k



Partnership



Our approach



Agricultural research happens at all scales

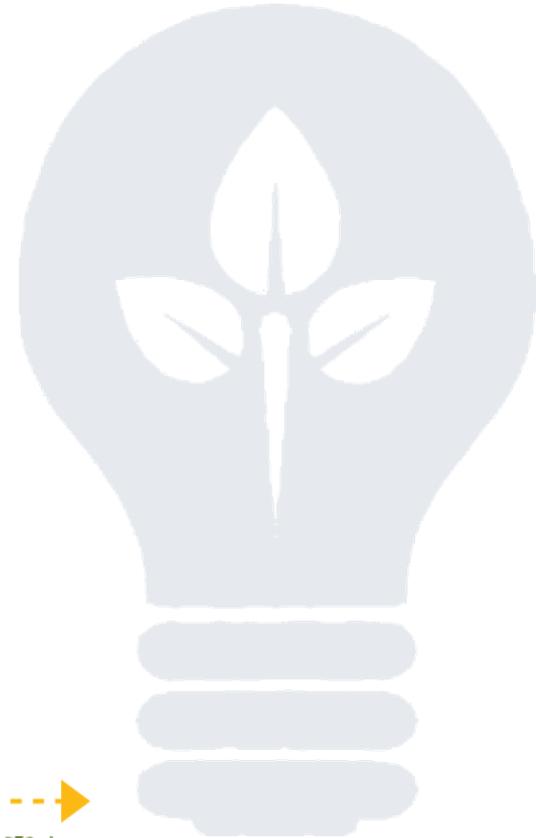
From **one farmer** treating half a field with a soil amendment and measuring the effects to a **5 year, multi-million-pound project** to develop a new variety

How does it work?

There's a place for everything. But many of the

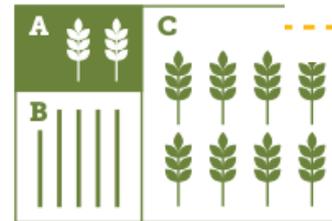
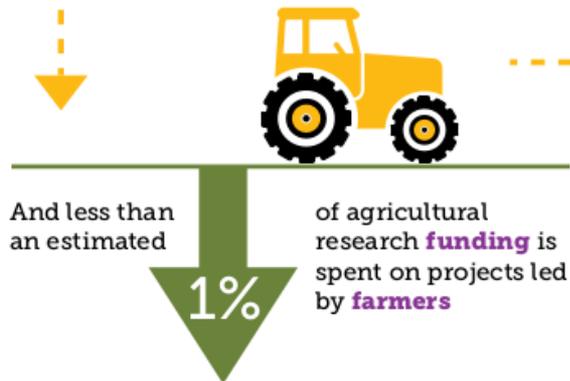


in farming come from **farmers**



Innovative Farmers is a network of people who want to **change this**

The network runs **'field labs'**, **practical** trials that are on-farm and **hands-on**





They're led by groups of farmers, on the **issues which matter to them**



The group are matched with a **researcher** to help design the trial and **analyse the results**. In return, the researcher gets to work on **projects that have real impact**



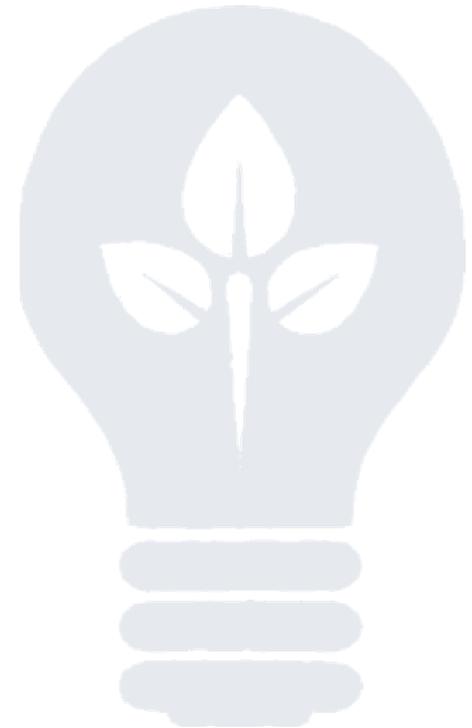
There's a dedicated research fund of up to **£10,000 for each field lab**



So far, this fund has invested **£175k**, covering field lab costs like soil testing and seeds



And everything the groups find out is **shared online**, so **everyone benefits**



Agroforestry related Innovative Farmers Groups:

- Soil amendments for top fruit growers
- Willow woodchip for scab control
- Managing Shropshire sheep in orchards
- Biochar for soil and livestock health
- Growing with peat-free woodchip compost



Partnership

