



The demonstration was organized on 'Hof ten Torre', a farm situated in the western part of Flanders. In the past, the farm had mainly pig production activities, but has now converted to organic farming, and main activities are now arable farming and agritourism. The farmer cooperates with his son, who has an organic dairy farm nearby. This demonstration was the first of its kind to be organized on this farm (organized by an experimental research center), but the farm has previous experience with open farm days.



Objectives

- Demonstration of 7 new types of machines for mechanical weeding in maize
- Show possibilities of mechanical weeding to a wide audience (conventional + organic)

Motivations

- Show significant improvements in available weeding techniques (advisor)
- Farmer is part of an operational group, with an interest to jointly purchase a machine
- To support overall development of the organic sector

Topic selection

- Demonstration was initiated by operational group
- Topics for research/operational groups: are decided jointly researchers and technical advisory board, consisting partly of farmers
- Single technique

Audience & participation

- Mainly farmers, but also researchers, advisors, teachers, ...
- Conventional farmers were also targeted, because of expected changes in legislation
- No participation fee

Demonstration set-up

- Set-up was designed by the researchers, topic originated from the operational group.
- Actual demonstration mainly by advisor, only a small active part for the farmer during the demonstration event.
- Short introduction, followed by on-field demonstration of 7 machines, and concluded with a network event (to allow time for discussion)
- There is no formal evaluation of the demonstration, but feedback is certainly collected during the networking

Evaluation peer-to-peer learning environment ( 8th June 2018 )

- 80-100 visitors
- The on-field demonstration allowed the participants to see the machines in action, and evaluate them in a working context. Direct comparison between the different machines was possible.
- Prior knowledge was recommended (to make a proper evaluation of the results in the field)
- Intense interaction and evaluation between the participants, both on the field and afterwards

- Host farmer has little to no experience in hosting demonstrations in his farm. This is in fact quite typical for the way on-farm demonstrations are organized in Flanders.
- Host farmer is willing to open his farm and fields for demonstration, but organization and actual demonstration is in the hands of the advisor/researcher. However, due to the technical advisory board: relevance of the demonstration for a wider farming audience is guaranteed
- One-off demonstration, because of the context (operational group for 2 years)
- Key areas to explore: cooperation between experimental research centers and local farmers, possibilities through operational groups for demo's, on-field demonstrations make it tangible

