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FARMER TO FARMER

On-farm demonstrations to speed up innovation amongst farmers. The case of SamZones (Sweden)

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On-farm demonstrations to speed up innovation amongst farmers. SamZones (Sweden)

SamZones in Sweden are small areas used to cultivate mixtures of herb and grass for several causes. We have identified around 30 different positive functions of the SamZones for farmers, nature or society: To protect water against runoff of pesticides or fertilizers, promote biodiversity, increase the availability of pollinators or promote the presence of animals, reduce soil compaction on the main field. They can be grown on the edge, middle or around of a field, beside a watercourse, etc...



The Swedish network Odling I Balans (OiB) has tested and showed them on their farms during 2018. The seed mixtures used for the SamZones are based on scientific findings and practical experience. There is interest from the farming industry for these zones and the Swedish authorities are supporting the concept.

Farmers in OiB have positive experience on SamZones and are enthusiastic to continue growing them. However, how this concept can be spread and become interesting for other farmers in Sweden? The results of AgriDemo-F2F project show that the demonstration of the SamZones using peer to peer learning is a very effective way to spread and show innovations and increase the interest of other farmers. "I get questions from the neighboring farmers after the demonstration and they want to know more in detail how to grow and manage the SamZon," tells Martin Andersson one of the farmers in the farm network. Another conclusion is that the best and most effective way to speed up changes is to support farmers' initiatives. Our recommendation is to arrange demonstrations on farms by given the opportunity to farmers to discuss different solutions among themselves.



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