

BICOPOLL: Targeted Precision Biocontrol and Enhanced Pollination

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BICOPOLL and BICOPOLL-NET connect 12 research units from 10 European countries and autonomous regions into a concerted effort to develop and bring into practice improved methods of biocontrol and pollination services, using strawberry as the case study. BICOPOLL partners will use bees to (i) precision deliver biocontrol agents to the flowers of the target crops to provide control of diseases, (ii) improve the pollination of horticultural crops. BICOPOLL will provide a pan-European case study on protecting strawberry from the grey mould. Additionally, we will improve the efficiency of the entomovector technology via innovative research on bee management, manipulation of bee behavior, and on the plant-pathogen-vector-antagonist-system, and will investigate possibilities of expanding the use of the concept into other berry and fruit growing systems. This is a highly innovative approach to solving some of the most difficult disease problems in berry and fruit production. The entomovector approach represents the only significant breakthrough in sight for improving plant protection in organic cropping systems and also conventional growers will benefit. We investigate, exploit, and support the natural ecological functions of biocontrol and pollination, and enhance these via innovative management. The entomovector technology contributes to improved resource use and efficiency in production, and enhances local biodiversity. The main target groups are organic and conventional strawberry growers, other berry and fruit growers, as well as beekeepers, to whom technology and knowledge transfer will be implemented during the project via direct contacts and by demonstration trials. The projects will cover three growing seasons during 2012–2014.