

Title: Biodiversity on farmland: worth the bother?

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Abstract:

Agriculture worldwide is usually dominated by monocultures, with a single crop plant and little other diversity. Such systems are usually based on very high inputs such as fertilisers, weed killers and insecticides. These inputs can be costly, maintain diversity at low levels and are increasingly meeting market resistance. The right biodiversity, in the right place and at the right time can ameliorate some of these negatives but its deployment needs to be based on sound ecological research and the farming community needs to be involved from the beginning. Examples of how this change has been achieved in New Zealand will be given, covering pastoral and viticultural landscapes.