

Soft Approach

IPM Strategy for the Brassica crops.



National Vegetable
Extension Network

SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

There is a concerning lack of understanding of what an IPM strategy represents or can look like on farm. The collective understanding from the research conducted is that a strategy is defined as.

There are only three control options available to farmers to control pests. These are

1. Biological (predators, parasites and pathogens of the pests)
2. Cultural or management methods
3. Chemical options.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) simply involves integrating these three available control methods in a compatible way. Cultural options include a wide variety of methods including variety selection, time of planting, physical barriers, mulching and many more. Cultural methods can be seen as either assisting biological control agents or discouraging pests.

In almost all outdoor vegetable crops the biological control agents are naturally occurring, and so methods to encourage them include providing suitable pollen and nectar sources, but other methods such as sequential plantings can be just as important. Releases of commercially produced beneficial insects and mites are routine in protected cropping but are not required in outdoor vegetable crops. The recent availability of *Diadegma* wasps to assist in the control of diamondback moth in brassica crops is an exception that is worth considering.

The use of chemistry (pesticides) in an IPM strategy is to be treated with the highest level of respect. This is to ensure that it protects the strategy that is in place, the toxicity and residual effect of the chemistry used should be strongly researched so that it doesn't impact or negate the work that has been implemented.

Advantages of utilising an IPM strategy.

- * reduction of the amount of broad - spectrum pesticides used in the environment.
- * reduction in the opportunity for a pest to develop a resistance to a specific group of pesticides.
- * Increased quality and yield
- * Improved worker, consumer and Environmental safety.
- * Reduction to the risk to organisms that aren't being targeted.
- * Maintaining a balanced ecosystem.

Disadvantages of not implementing an IPM strategy.

- * greater amount of resources needed to maintain a strategy
- * more detailed planning required to implement a strategy.
- * a greater understanding required to battle a pest of concern.
- * The strategy needs to be closely monitored and swift action is required to combat strains to the system. (Pest infestation)
- * potential that the beneficial to become a pest in the future.

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