

## Integrated Pest Management (IPM) assessment plans



### What is IPM?

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is the holistic approach to pest management which aims to maximise profitability and productivity whilst minimising the negative impacts of production on the environment. The goal is environmental and economic sustainability.

### How is it measured?

The IPM Assessment Plans are based on research led by SRUC who developed an approach to measure IPM adoption and identified potential routes to further uptake (<https://doi.org/10.1002/ps.5428>; <https://doi.org/10.1002/ps.6452>).

They are designed to facilitate discussions between crop protection decision makers aiming to increase IPM adoption. The plans only take 20-30 minutes to complete and are more likely to be of benefit if the farmer, rather than their agronomist, fills them in as this is more likely to stimulate discussions around what IPM practices should be introduced on farm in the future.

Since launch at the start of 2021, over 9000 plans have been completed in the UK. Specific plans are now available for the arable, grassland and horticultural sectors.

The plans gather information on the IPM practices currently adopted, perceived pest threats, preferred source of IPM information, and sociodemographic information relating to the farm and the farmer. Issues or topics requiring further research and knowledge exchange activities are also identified through the IPM plans.

The plans provide a baseline for the farm via a metric based on expert opinion which gives farmers an IPM score out of 100. Self-identified targets can then be set for the individual farm. Targets can also be set at the regional and national level.

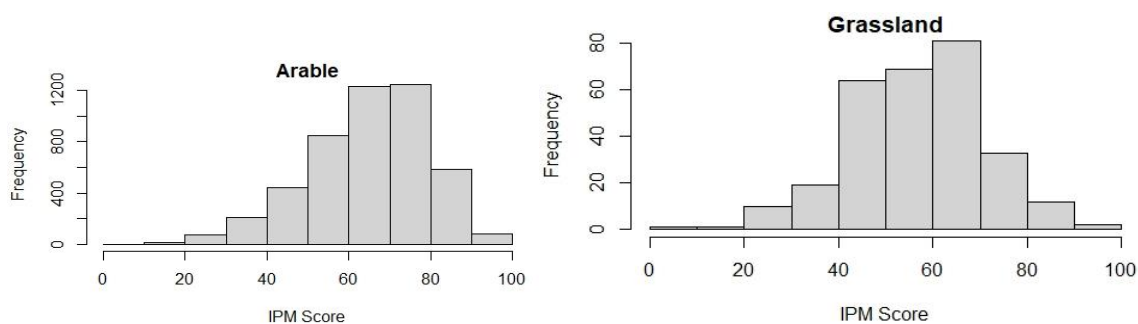


Figure 1. Distribution of IPM scores in 2022



### **What can we learn from high adopters?**

The majority of arable farms score over 50% in the metric. High IPM adopters are more familiar with IPM, adopt many preventative measures, consider multiple factors when developing IPM plans, and actively seek current evidence based IPM knowledge from research organisations, levy boards, professional membership groups and agronomists (crop advisers).

IPM adoption levels are influenced by many factors including the amount of cropped area, specific crops grown, farmer age and level of education but the biggest single influencer is the agronomist.

Time and effort required to increase knowledge of IPM is often cited as the main barrier to IPM uptake. An agronomist who is highly knowledgeable in IPM can provide farm specific advice allowing for the further implementation of IPM practice.

### **How to complete an IPM plan**

Completing an IPM plan is an annual requirement of farmers operating under quality assurance schemes such as Red Tractor and Scottish Quality Crops. This allows for the monitoring of changes in IPM practice and provides an indication of the effectiveness of research and knowledge exchange activities.

It is important that the risks and rewards associated with high levels of IPM adoption are shared as there are many stakeholders who influence IPM decision making. Sole responsibility does not lie with the farmer and their agronomist.



Link to the IPM plans: <https://www.planthealthcentre.scot/index.php/scottish-ipm-assessment-plan>