



FarmDemo



## **FIELD LABS: an opportunity for farmers to host and demonstrate trials on terminating cover crops**

**Field Labs, part of the Innovative Farmers programme in UK, provide an opportunity for farmers to host and demonstrate trial outcomes.**

Field labs are on-farm trials on topics identified as important by farmers. Farmer groups meet at field lab events 2-3 times a year to observe and review the trials. Farmers host the trials and demonstrate them (often in rotation) at these events to other farmers in the group.

In this example, farmers in the 'Cover Crop Management Group' are hosting field labs trialling alternatives to ploughing or glyphosate for terminating cover crops. This is an issue identified by both organic and conventional

farmers. The group are trialling a range of techniques over a two year period including roller crimpers, grazing and mulching. Five farmers (organic and conventional) are hosting trials, according to agreed protocols.

Field Labs on this topic are typically small groups (6-12). A group coordinator with technical experience provides facilitation, while a researcher provides up to date science and supports farmers in designing, running and interpreting the trials. The small number of participants encourages open-discussion and questioning which leads to group problem solving. Triallist and researcher updates are provided on the web platform to complement the farm meeting discussions.