

# ARGUMENTS

## Introduction:

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a sustainable approach to manage pests that combines biological, cultural, physical and chemical tools in a way that minimizes economic, health, and environmental risks. It relies on technical solutions to manage weeds, pests and diseases but also takes social, economic and environmental factors into account. In this way, IPM contributes to the three pillars of sustainable development in agriculture.

Regarding social aspects and from the point of view of farmers, IPM can improve **farmer image** and is an opportunity to respond to demands for reduced health and environmental risks associated with pesticides. It can also help farmers **anticipate change**. By investing today in IPM, farmers will be better prepared for the requirements of tomorrow. IPM farms will be less affected by **new constraints** affecting buffer zones, re-entry periods, authorised wind speed, reduced dosages, banned pesticides, as well as the evolution of resistance to pesticides.

For advisors, IPM is an opportunity to renew their professional priorities, embrace the new demands for sustainable development and change the way they think about crop protection. IPM is learning intensive because it is not a fixed set of practices to be mechanically repeated every year. Rather, it is a way of tackling problems that integrates agronomic, ecological, biological and technological knowledge into crop protection strategies. The resulting insights and approaches can be shared with farmers. In this way, advisors and consultants can offer new **services to farmers** such as the use of Decision Support Systems and other IPM tools, or with IPM-related training, or with general advice on how to meet consumer and environmental requirements, for example.

Over the short-term, IPM can generate benefits when attention is placed on optimising treatments and giving preference to tactics that have the least negative impact. Over the **long-term effects**, IPM generates a variety of benefits. Within cultivated fields, IPM can generate an *eco-regulated system* where more stable populations of beneficials can regulate pests and minimise outbreaks. By giving priority to preventive measures, more stable farming systems that are inherently less vulnerable to pests and less reliant on pesticides are favoured. This can reduce economic as well as technical dependence on pesticides. In fact, over the long term, the **economic viability** of IPM has been shown. Some of the economic benefits come from reduced pesticide volumes and treatments, higher quality of production and fewer residue problems in food, feed, and ground and surface water. Beyond the fields, IPM can minimize

impacts on water and non-target flora and fauna, decrease drift, run-off and leaching. And finally, IPM also improves **worker safety** by reducing exposure and **food** by ensuring that **Maximum Residues Levels** are not exceeded.

The set of "argument sheets" in this training guide offer ideas for advisors on how to use the above arguments to better engage farmers in a learning process around IPM.



# Arguments section

