

Stakeholders point at enhancing environmental and health benefits of WeLASER system application

Opportunities

The Third WeLASER Stakeholder Event was held on 19/11/2021 gathering over 40 participants including farmers, representatives of research and agricultural institutions, policymakers, NGOs and project partners. The event was a new opportunity to involve stakeholders in project activities. It was focused on key environmental requirements in relation to farmers' and societal needs and respective EU policies.

Key points raised:

- Environmental issues in WeLASER are viewed as significant and lesser environmental contamination is pointed out as the key benefit
- WeLASER technology can bring opportunities for conventional farmers to become more sustainable
- Ecosystem services can be enhanced through operational schemes of selective weed management, e.g., cover crops and nitrogen fixation crops have to be recognized
- In the organic sector, it has to be thoroughly considered whether laser comply with organic principles, if and how WeLASER could be approved, used and in which occasions, e.g. with respect to field surface characteristics
- Key environmental issues for consideration are: energy intensity, healthiness to land and crops, effects on pollinators and natural predators of certain pests and animals
- It is envisaged that the technology is suitable for vegetables and farming in rows, covering annuals and perennial weeds as thistle. It can be used for example for weeding rape seed in early growth phase without harming pollinators
- In large fields to enhance weeding efficiency and environmental benefits the opportunities for using fleets of robots should be considered. Continuous autonomous work plays a role in this respect



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