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European Research Alliance

## ERA Pesticide Free

Towards a chemical pesticide free agriculture

# NEWSLETTER #1

14 September 2023

### Field Trip, the Youtube series about the Alliance, receives the ‘Reporters of Hope’ Awards

On 12 September 2023, the [video series Field Trip](#) by French science journalist Pierre Girard, co-produced by INRAE, was awarded the “[Prix Reporters d’Espoirs](#)” ([Reporters of Hope Awards](#)), which honours journalists who report on innovative and meaningful answers to major concerns of our time.

With the Field Trip series, Pierre Girard has initiated a discovery tour of agricultural scientific research across Europe, visiting members of the [European Research Alliance “Towards chemical pesticide-free agriculture”](#). In short 10-minute videos, Pierre Girard highlights experiments being carried out by Alliance members. From France (INRAE) to Romania (USAMV Bucurest), via Hungary (ÖMKI), Switzerland (Agroscope and FiBL), Germany (JKI), Denmark (Aarhus University) and Belgium (Biobest), Field Trip allows any curious person to discover a wide range of solutions developed by scientists to reduce pesticide use.

The members of the Alliance warmly congratulate Pierre Girard on bringing to a wide audience the work of the Alliance through innovative and informative videos.



All episodes of the Field Trip series are available on [Pierre Girard's YouTube channel](#).

Stay tuned! Field Trip will continue to explore European scientific research into pesticide-free agriculture, visiting Alliance members in Italy (University of Bologna), Sweden (SLU) and Croatia (University of Zagreb).



[Read more on the Alliance's website](#)

### An Alliance consortium to support the implementation of the SUR

A consortium of 11 research organisations from 8 EU Member States - all members of the Alliance - led by Maud Blanck (INRAE) has been set to build a LIFE project, named Agrowise, with the aim to provide support to the European Commission and Member States in the context of the implementation of the Regulation on sustainable use of plant protection products (“SUR”). The SUR makes EU pesticide reduction targets legally binding and sets out provisions on how to achieve them, including an obligation for Member States to translate the principles of IPM into crop-specific rules for pest management.

Through the definition of guidelines, the Agrowise project aimed at supporting Member States in crafting these crop-specific rules, that according to the SUR proposal would be either binding or optional on farmers and other users.

Through Agrowise, the Alliance is affirming its commitment to help achieving the EU targets for reducing the use and risk of pesticides.

The proposal was sent to the Commission on 7 September. Results are expected in a few weeks, or a few months, for a starting date planned on April 2024.



### Plant-to-plant interactions may confer disease immunity in both wheat and rice



© Jean-Benoît Morel (INRAE)

Researchers from INRAE, Institut Agro Montpellier, CIRAD, CNRS and Yunnan Agricultural University (China) have discovered a form of social immunity in wheat and rice. Susceptibility to disease in these plants is not only conditioned by resistance genes, but also results from a dialogue with their neighbours of the same species. Their results, published in PLOS Biology, show that in some cases this cooperation can reduce the plant susceptibility to disease by almost 90%, i.e. as much as their own resistance genes. These results open up new prospects for improving plant resistance to disease and helping to reduce the use of pesticides.

**Citation:** Péliissier R, Ballini E, Temple C, Ducasse A, Colombo M, Frouin J, et al. (2023) The genetic identity of neighboring plants in intraspecific mixtures modulates disease susceptibility of both wheat and rice. PLoS Biol 21(9): e3002287. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3002287>

This is the newsletter of the European Research Alliance *Towards a chemical pesticide free agriculture*  
Visite the Alliance's website: <https://www.era-pesticidefree.eu/>

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