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METHODS FOR EVALUATION OF FUNCTIONAL AGROBIODIVERSITY TECHNIQUES IN APPLE ORCHARDS OF LATVIA

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One of the aims of the international CORE Organic Plus project EcoOrchard “Innovative design and management to boost functional biodiversity of organic orchards” is to collect the existing information about functional agrobiodiversity (FAB) in agricultural landscapes and its management techniques in Latvia, and exchange knowledge and practical experience between scientists, consultants and owners of apple orchards.

A term FAB is new in Latvia, but at the same time, some of FAB techniques are already used in apple orchards. Most of those techniques are natural elements in Latvian agricultural landscape. In the frames of this project we investigated perennial crops - apple orchards, insects in apple orchards, to select suitable methods for evaluation of FAB techniques.

We performed testing of five methods for evaluation of FAB techniques together with organic apple growers: visual observation of the rosy apple aphid colonies and predators in them, none destructive beating of tree brunch, *Cydia* sentinel traps (predation cards with eggs of codling moth), aphid sentinel traps (predation cards with aphids), corrugated cardboard band-traps. Farmers were encouraged to choose one or more methods they would like to test in their own apple orchards. Results of research will be discussed.

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