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Identifying obstacles and ranking common biological control research priorities for Europe to manage most economically important pests in arable, vegetable and perennial crops

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: EU agriculture is currently in transition from conventional crop protection to integrated pest management (IPM). Because biocontrol is a key component of IPM, many European countries recently have intensified their national efforts on biocontrol research and innovation (R&I) although such initiatives are often fragmented. The operational outputs of national efforts would benefit from closer collaboration among stakeholders via transnationally coordinated approaches since most economically important pests are similar across Europe.

RESULTS: This paper proposes a common European framework on biocontrol R&I. It identifies generic R&I bottlenecks and needs as well as priorities for three crop types (arable, vegetable and perennial crops).

CONCLUSIONS: The existing gap between the market offers of biocontrol solutions and the demand of growers, the lengthy and expensive registration process for biocontrol solutions and their varying effectiveness due to variable climatic conditions and site-specific factors across Europe are key obstacles hindering the development and adoption of biocontrol solutions in Europe. Considering arable, vegetable and perennial crops, a dozen of common target pests are identified for each type of crop and ranked by order of importance at European level. Such a ranked list indicates numerous topics on which future joint transnational efforts would be justified.

Keywords: Beneficials; biopesticides; biomolecules; European research networking; innovation; integrated pest management; semiochemicals; sustainable agriculture

1. Introduction

European agriculture is currently in transition from conventional crop protection, based on chemical pesticides, to integrated pest management (IPM) due to changes in the European legislation which aims to protect human health and the environment.¹ The transition process requires that increased knowledge and innovation are generated and adapted to specific contexts, and that new solutions are effectively adopted by all actors

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involved in the crop protection sector. These needs have led to specific interest in the learning and training processes with a focus on co-innovation dynamics involving a wide range of actors in the construction of innovations through strategic choices. Unlike the traditional crop protection model, where innovations were supplied as ‘ready-to-use’ tools, IPM is a dynamic system constantly modulated by end-users. To make any IPM system successful there is a need to put in place alternatives to conventional pesticides and plant protection measures that allow an effective management of crop pests (animal pests, pathogens and weeds). Biocontrol has the potential to become one of the main pillars of IPM systems and thus represents a key lever for a reduced reliance on conventional pesticides. Its principle is based on managing the balance of pest populations rather than eradicating them (pest management rather than pest control). In this paper, for biocontrol we refer to all methods/tools/measures/agents of plant protection which rely on the use of beneficial organisms² as well as their natural mechanisms and interactions which govern the relationship between biological species in the natural environment. Thus, this includes augmentative control, conservation biocontrol, but also the use of biopesticides, semiochemicals and plant defense stimulators.

Recent developments in the regulation of pesticides at European level — notably Regulation 1107/2009/EC³ — have created favorable conditions for biocontrol R&I in Europe. This legal requirement on the authorization and use of plant protection products have potential to promote biocontrol R&I in Europe. In particular, the classification of active ingredients into four groups (basic, low-risk and standard substances, and candidates for substitution) would allow to place biocontrol agents within the low-risk category making their registration easier and less expensive. Also natural products of plant origin represent an important group of candidates to be included within the low-risk substances.⁴ The EU has recently approved a first list of low-risk substances (*e.g. Isaria fumosorosea* (syn. *Paecilomyces fumosoroseus*), *Pepino mosaic virus*). The need to have a fast approval process for low-risk substances and harmonization of the assessment procedure within the EU member states was recently discussed in an international stakeholder meeting.⁵ Data requirements for the approval of active substances and plant protection products needed at EU level are mainly adapted to conventional pesticides and there is not yet a different approval and registration procedure for biocontrol solutions⁶ nor there is any registration procedure

for biostimulants.⁷ There are similar constraints while dealing with pesticide residue issues which are required to fulfil the European Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2009.^{8,9}

Biocontrol R&I has become increasingly dynamic and involves a wide range of stakeholders from a variety of public institutions and companies (cooperatives and private companies). However, biocontrol R&I efforts are often carried out within national initiatives and in a fragmented fashion. Therefore, their operational outputs would benefit from closer collaboration between academia, the industry and the agricultural sectors, on one hand, and from transnational cooperation, on the other. In addition, a greater level of collaboration/knowledge-sharing is required to address key biocontrol needs and to pool biocontrol R&I efforts nationally and internationally on common pest priorities for a better biocontrol service provision.

Taking into account the particularly favorable current environment to address biocontrol R&I challenges in Europe, three networks concerned by biocontrol research organized a “Joint international workshop on biocontrol” in Paris, France on the 27th and 28th of January 2016. These networks are the French National Action Plan “EcoPhyto”¹⁰, the European Research Area Network of Integrated Pest Management in Europe¹¹, and the West Palearctic Regional Section of the International Organization for Biological and Integrated Control.¹² Fifty-three experts from 16 countries — including scientists, governmental officials, policy makers, company representatives and agricultural advisors — met, discussed and ranked the most important and common pest problems in arable, vegetable (both indoor and outdoor), and perennial (orchards and vineyards) crops in Europe.

This paper aims to present the major outcomes of the workshop obtained by a questionnaire survey and a face-to-face group discussion. The questionnaire was designed and circulated in advance to all invited participants to receive their feedback on the most relevant biocontrol R&I issues in Europe. Additional responses were also received from experts who did not attend the workshop. The questionnaire included seven queries with multiple-choice answers and also provided the possibility for the respondents to express alternative opinions (Tables 1; Supplementary material S1). The face-to-face group discussion was held during the workshop for each of the three crop groups mentioned above, and mainly focused on the sorting and ranking of the major pest problems and biological control priorities shared between European countries.

2. Statistics on the questionnaire survey on major biocontrol research and implementation bottlenecks

Overall, 63 biocontrol experts from over 20 countries provided the completed questionnaire. The responses were analyzed and the figures are presented in Table 1.

None of the respondents considered biocontrol as an independent approach to IPM. Because the efficacy of biocontrol methods is often considered as too limited to be relied upon singly for pest control, most participants emphasized that integrating biocontrol into IPM strategies, through the combination of different methods with partial effects, is particularly relevant to reduce reliance on conventional pesticides.

The opinions were divided concerning factors hindering the development of biocontrol in Europe. While for almost one third of the respondents the main obstacle was the absence of a sufficiently large array of biocontrol solutions to enable the build-up of pest management strategies, others stated that the lack of projects aiming at integrating biocontrol solutions with other measures and limited funding for biocontrol research were the main impediments to biocontrol development. Some respondents provided other responses including insufficient communication between research organizations in Europe, leading to an overlap of activities, insufficient biocontrol research demand due to the availability of chemical pesticides, the lack of long-term funding schemes or the lack of multidisciplinary biocontrol research aiming at integrating biocontrol products to other measures (Supplementary material S1).

There was not a clear consensus on the potential factors hindering the implementation of biocontrol in Europe. The lack of commercially available bio-pesticides was the most frequent answer, followed by the lengthy and expensive registration process for bio-pesticides. Concerning the latter, the EU is supposed to come up with a proposal for a simplified dossier for the authorization of low-risk substances. Such a new scenario will result in a reduced legislative burden thereby favoring market availability of biocontrol solutions in Europe. Other responses included: the varying effectiveness of biocontrol products/agents due to very diverse and variable climatic conditions and site-specific factors across Europe, the reluctance of growers to take risks with methods whose performances are perceived as uncertain, difficulty to evaluate the performance and impact of biocontrol methods posing particular problems linked to their partial effects,

variable efficacy of biocontrol tools/measures compared to chemical solutions and growers' expectations that biocontrol solutions should be as quick and effective as chemical pesticides, constraints linked to the organization of work and compatibility with other agronomic practices, lack of evidence showing successful strategies to integrate biocontrol into IPM, lack of knowledge on the unintentional effects of biocontrol products/agents, lack of methods to assess the benefits of biocontrol to human health and the environment, and lack of public incentives for farmers to use biocontrol (Supplementary material S1).

Opinions were equally split on whether biocontrol research in Europe should focus on the development of new biocontrol products, or on the optimization of their efficacy, with a majority advocating to consider both objectives altogether. Many additional suggestions concerned the demonstration of efficacy of biocontrol at field level and the integration of biocontrol with other strategies, including conservation biocontrol, in the context of cropping system management (Supplementary material S1).

There was almost a clear consensus among the respondents about the major factor(s) to be considered while implementing biocontrol measures. Most of them emphasized the need to focus on multiple interactions while only a few considered the interactions between biocontrol and plant genetics as more important. In addition, application techniques, formulation of the biocontrol products, instructions for growers or advisors were mentioned, as well as a number of socio-economic factors (a biocontrol program is in most of case more expensive than a chemical protection program) influencing the uptake of biocontrol: the effects of market dynamics (the positioning of biocontrol products among inputs, the positioning of agricultural products from practices using biocontrol) and the role of incentives (quality labels or certification, financial incentives) from industries and public policy (Supplementary material S1).

The majority of the respondents indicated that biocontrol should focus on multiple pest targets rather than single pest species, especially when a biocontrol program is composed of different biocontrol agents/products. Comments underlined the need to balance the practical benefits of biocontrol products having a broad range of actions with their risks in terms of unintentional effects to non-target organisms (Supplementary material S1).

Finally, most of the respondents stated that strengthening the effectiveness of biocontrol by other agronomic practices/strategies and decision support systems can promote biocontrol, although a few of them mentioned that partial plant resistance is the best way to this aim. Adjustments to the ecosystem, precise knowledge of the pest densities and the actual status of the targeted stage of pests in the field to improve the timing of the application, the use of local biocontrol agents to get the best adaptation to the local conditions, recognition of the importance of biocontrol at farmers' level as well as on society level were other measures stated as factors enhancing biocontrol during its application (Supplementary material S1).

3. Ranking of biological control research priorities

During the individual discussion phase, the participants from each crop group were asked to provide the top-ten pest priorities to be tackled in their own country. While setting up such a priority list, participants were requested to take into account: i) the potential economic impact, in terms of yield loss and quality implications, associated with a given pest on a given crop, and ii) the possible lack of conventional chemical control solutions, due either to the withdrawal from the market of previously available pesticides or further restriction in their use. In some cases, the increased risk of resistance development to conventional pesticides were also taken into account. The overall objective was to identify all those economically important pests for which no or little sustainable pest management options, notably biocontrol solution, are available. The discussion was followed by a sorting phase, during which common pest problems for each crop type were grouped, based on the number of countries sharing the same problem/s followed by their ranking in order of importance.

3.1. Arable crops

Arable crops comprise a wide variety of crops, including cereals, oilseed rape, peas and beans, sugar beet and potatoes. Although a number of conventional pesticides are available to manage most economically important pests of arable crops, growers suffer from the lack of effective management solutions for certain pests. Therefore, growers require more tools and consequently there is a strong need to develop biocontrol solutions to protect these crops.

A final list of 13 common priority pest problems that were sorted and ranked for arable crops is reported in Table 2. Overall, it has emerged that few biocontrol solutions are available on the market for growers to manage these pests. Although some new biocontrol solutions are under development, there is a need for enlarging research efforts, especially for the screening of new biocontrol agents for arable crops.

3.2. Vegetable crops

Many vegetable crops fall under the category of “minor or speciality crops” which acutely suffer from the lack of effective conventional pesticides.¹³ Vegetable crops in Europe are characterized by a large diversity of species (more than 60) with marked differences in terms of the cultivated hectares for each crop (from less than 100 ha to several thousands). Further, for each crop, there is an important diversity of production technics adopted to supply products to the market all year round. Even when conventional pesticides are available, market acceptability driven by residues in food products is an issue for a number of vegetables as they are consumed fresh. Finally, the resistance of several important pests to pesticides and the sensitivity of pollinators to these products (e.g. bumblebees) urge for an important adaptation of pest management methods. Therefore, biocontrol, along with other alternative measures to conventional pesticides, has an important role to play to protect this crop group. Another concern is that while biocontrol in vegetable crops is widely practiced in protected environments such as greenhouses^{14,15} its use under field conditions is still limited. This requires that biocontrol measures available and used in greenhouses are adapted to field conditions although it is not always feasible since interacting factors in outdoor conditions are different than those from indoor conditions.

Table 3 presents a list of 12 common pest problems which were sorted and ranked seeking an immediate need for biocontrol solutions. Unlike the case of arable crops, there are many ongoing efforts in the development of biocontrol solutions for major vegetable crops with a number of products already available on the market. Therefore, besides the need of developing new products, research should also address the issues of optimizing, integrating and implementing already available products/measures.

3.3. Perennial crops

The perennial crops considered covered grapevine and different fruit crops, most of which are “minor crops”. Consequently, the requirement of biocontrol R&I for this crop group is important for the same reason as described above. Although biocontrol is increasingly applied in perennial crops,^{16,17} there is still a number of important pest problems for which no biocontrol solution is available or even under development.

This is illustrated by Table 4 which lists 12 common pest problems on perennial crops urgently requiring biocontrol solutions. Consequently, a wide range of needed research actions is advocated, firstly in the screening of new agents, but also on, integration and adoption of the new biocontrol solutions.

4. Conclusions and perspectives

This survey highlights the considerable gap between the current offer in biocontrol solutions and what farmers would need to manage important pest problems. The primary demand addressed to R&I is on enlarging the range of biocontrol solutions through screening for new biocontrol agents suitable for commercial use¹⁸ and engineering new methods.

Contributors to the survey have further identified diverse factors currently impeding the development of biocontrol and suggested research approaches to help raise these constraints. These suggestions can be summarized in the following recommendations: (1) invest in the appropriate assessment of biocontrol methods, including both the consideration of their potential unintentional effects and the identification of the contextual factors that determine their performance, in order to improve farmers’ guidance on the proper use of biocontrol; (2) devise strategies combining biocontrol methods with other pest management tactics, in the context of IPM or even cropping system management, to help farmers integrate biocontrol into their practices; (3) enlarge the scope of biocontrol research to the socioeconomic factors influencing biocontrol adoption, which calls for the development of multidisciplinary projects involving diverse actors throughout the value chain of agriculture.

Compared to fruit or vegetables, arable crops are in a markedly different situation: a lower input/cost per hectare and a lower consumers’ concern on pesticide residues reduce the incentive to introduce biocontrol. Additional efforts are needed to raise

awareness on the positive environmental effects expected from biocontrol in arable crops because of their huge acreages. Conservation biocontrol could be an interesting approach in this context which might be fostered by recent EU agri-environmental funding schemes aiming at promoting farmland¹⁹.

These recommendations issued by a large panel of experts represent a valuable contribution to the definition of priorities in biocontrol research and attractive opportunities for transnational joint initiatives.

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Table 1. Relevant questions and multiple answers related to biocontrol RDI asked through the questionnaire. The same respondent could provide more than one answer to the same question. In total, Sixty-three experts responded to the questionnaire.

Question	Multiple responses provided	Percentage
1. What is your opinion on biocontrol as a crop protection measure?	Biocontrol is an independent approach for crop protection	0
	Biocontrol is part of IPM	78
	Both	16
	Other (specify)*	5
	No response	0
2. What hinders the development of biocontrol measures in Europe?	Limited funding for biocontrol research (A)	10
	Lack of projects aiming at integrating biocontrol products to other measures (B)	6
	Insufficient range of biocontrol solutions to build up strategies ('C)	14
	A + B	8
	B + C	16
	C + A	6
	All of them	16
	Other (specify)*	17
	No response	6
3. What hinders the development and implementation of biocontrol in Europe?	Lengthy and expensive registration process for bio-pesticides (A)	14
	Lack of commercially available bio-pesticides (B)	16
	Low effectiveness of bio-pesticides due to very diverse climatic conditions ('C)	3
	A + B	14
	B + C	6
	C + A	13
	All of them	11
	Other (specify)*	17

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	No response	5
4. What biocontrol research should focus on in Europe?	On the development of new biocontrol products	19
	On the optimization of the effects of the biocontrol products	19
	Both	44
	Other (specify)*	17
	No response	0
5. What is/are the main factor/s to be considered while implementing biocontrol measures?	Tritrophic interactions (biocontrol agent/tool, biotic and abiotic factors)	62
	The interactions between biocontrol - plant genetics	5
	Both	17
	Other (specify)*	16
	No response	0
6. What biocontrol solutions should focus on?	Single pest target	22
	Multiple pest target	32
	Both	24
	Other (specify)*	22
	No response	0
7. Which measure/s can enhance biocontrol during its application?	Strengthening the effectiveness of biocontrol by partial resistance	16
	Strengthening the effectiveness of biocontrol by other agronomic practices/DSS/strategies	65
	Other (specify)*	14
	No response	5

*Other responses which were different than those reported in the questionnaire are listed in Supplementary material S1

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Table 2. A final list of the most important common targets for new biocontrol products identified in arable crops across European countries. This list was sorted and ranked based on the two-day discussion of the biocontrol workshop. Arable crop group focused biocontrol solutions in *sensu strictu* which means that other alternative control options which form part of IPM (semiochemicals, fatty acids, botanicals, cultural practices, traps etc.) were not explicitly listed. In total, 13 priority pests were identified which were ranked into 3 classes: 1 = top priority, 2 = medium priority & 3 = low priority.

Rank	Pest (s)	Crop (s)	Control solution under development	Available for use	Type of research needed
1	Wireworms	Potato, maize	Entomopathogenic fungi	No	Pest biology, screening of additional biocontrol solutions, proof of concept
1	Septoria	Wheat	<i>Trichoderma</i> spp., <i>Bacillus</i> spp.	Laminarine (brown algae)	Screening for other solutions
Between 1 & 2	<i>Fusarium</i> sp.	Cereals, maize	Antagonist bacteria and fungi for ear treatment during flowering, crop residues, mycotoxin detoxification (e.g. degradation of deoxynivalenol), compounds produced by microorganisms	Polyversum (<i>Pythium oligandrum</i>)	Conditions of effectiveness under field condition, improving application strategies (for Polyversum), additional biocontrol solutions, proof of concept of microbial crop residues & seed treatments, endophytes
2	Late blight	potato	<i>Pseudomonas</i> spp. and <i>Bacillus</i> spp. antagonists, botanicals (<i>Primula veris</i>)	No	Screening for other solutions, improvement of existing candidates and formulation
2	Soil-borne pests (e.g., <i>Macrophomina</i> sp., <i>Verticillium</i> sp., <i>Rhizoctonia</i> sp., <i>Plasmodiopora</i> sp., <i>Aphanomyces</i> sp., <i>Dickeya</i> sp. and <i>Pectobacterium</i> sp., <i>Gaeumanomyces graminis</i>)	Arable crops	<i>Pseudomonas</i> spp. and <i>Bacillus</i> spp. antagonists, and many more	Polyversum (<i>Pythium oligandrum</i>), <i>Trichoderma</i> spp., <i>Streptomyces</i> spp.,	Improved application technology, supporting soil suppressiveness
2	<i>Echinocloa</i> sp., <i>Alopecurus</i> sp., <i>Apera</i> sp.	Arable crops	No	No	Screening of biocontrol agents (pathogens) and conservation biological strategies

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2	<i>Cirsium</i> sp.	Arable crops	Rusts (<i>Puccinia striiformis</i> , <i>Phoma</i> spp., <i>Sclerotinia</i> spp.), bacteria, flower-mining insects	Available in NZ (Phoma-based) but not in Europe	Combine biocontrol agents with cultural practices (IPM)
Between 2 & 3	Pollen beetle	Oilseed rape	Entomopathogenic fungi & nematodes (Beauveria)	No	Screening & optimization of biocontrol agents
Between 2 & 3	Weevils	Oilseed rape	Parasitoids	No	Screening & development of biocontrol agents, conservation biocontrol
Between 2 & 3	Flea beetles	Oilseed rape	Entomopathogenic nematodes	No	Screening & development of biocontrol agents
3	Sclerotinia rot	Oilseed rape, sunflower, soybean	<i>Trichoderma</i> spp., <i>Verticillium</i> spp., <i>Bacillus</i> sp.	Contans, <i>Bacillus pumilus</i> , <i>Pythium oligandrum</i>	Curative treatments, long term IPM strategies
3	Seed-borne diseases (e.g., fusarium, <i>Tilletia</i> sp.)	Cereals	Yes	Mycostop (<i>Streptomyces</i> sp.), Cedemon and Cerall (<i>Pseudomonas</i> sp.)	Shelf-life of microbials on seeds (development of expertise for seed production and treatments)
3	Post-harvest pests (e.g., lepidoptera, coleoptera)	Cereals	Parasitoids, pheromones	<i>Trichogramma</i> sp., other wasps, predatory mites	no research need identified

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Minchin, G. L. P. (2017). Identifying obstacles and ranking common biological control research priorities for Europe to manage most economically important pests of arable crops. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 54, 1-10. doi:10.1111/1365-2656.12700

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Nicot, P. C., Ricci, P., Thibierge, J., Villeneuve, F. (2017). Identifying obstacles and ranking common biological control research priorities for Europe to manage most economically important

Table 3. A final list of the most important common targets for new biocontrol products identified in vegetable crops (both indoor and outdoor) across European countries. This list was sorted and ranked based on the two-day discussion of the biocontrol workshop. The discussion was mainly focused on field vegetables. Biocontrol solutions were considered in *sensu lato* taking into account also other alternative control options which are part of IPM such as semiochemicals, fatty acids, botanicals, cultural practices, traps etc. In total, 12 priority pests were identified which were ranked from 1 to 12 in decreasing order of importance.

Rank	Pest	Crop(s)	Control solution under development	Available for use	Type of research needed
1	Weeds	all	rust, seed eating beetles, <i>Alternaria</i> spp.	research only	screening
2	Root flies	Brassicas, Onions, Raddish, Carrots, Beans,	Substrate management, PBMB, attract and kill, conservative biocontrol, beneficials including nematodes and entomopathogenic fungi	nematodes, rove beetles, predatory mites, fungi, plant extracts	engineering, and screening for finding new solutions, implementation
3	Powdery mildew	Tomatoes, Carrots, Cucurbits, Cabbage	Green pesticides, induced Resistance, elicitor, plant resistance, antagonists,	yes	engineering, and screening for finding new solutions, implementation
4	Thrips	Brassicas, Onions, Leek, Tomatoes, eggplant, pepper	Green pesticides, PBMB, beneficials, cons. Biocontrol, endophytes, plant resistance	yes	screening, engineering
5	Aphids	Leafy vegetables, Brassicas, Cucurbits, pepper, Solonaceae	Conservative biocontrol, entomopathogens, green pesticides, beneficials	yes	engineering, implementation, adoption
6	White flies	Tomatoes and other solanaceous vegetables, Brassicas, Cucurbits,	Beneficials, green pesticides,, PBMB, conventional biocontrol,	yes	screening, engineering
7	Downy mildew	Lettuce, Onions, Leafy vegetables, Cucurbits, herbs	Green pesticides, induced resistance. elicitor, variety res., antagonists	yes	screening, engineering

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minichini, L. P. (2017). Identifying obstacles and ranking common biological control research priorities for Europe to manage most economically important pests in vegetable crops. *Journal of Applied Entomology*, 151(1), 1-12. doi:10.1111/jap.12500

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8	<i>Fusarium</i> sp.	Onions, pepper, garlic, cucurbits, asparagus	Rootstocks, bio-fumigation, antagonists, endophytes, soil amendements, composts	yes	screening, engineering
9	Nematodes	Carrots, tomatoes, eggplant, pepper, onions, lettuce melons	biocontrol agents, green pesticides, trap plants	several products	engineering, screening, implementation
10	Lepidoptera	Brassicas, Tomatoes, pepper, Leafy vegetables, beans	Green pesticides, beneficials, conservation, biocontrol, microbials, PBMB	yes	engineering, implementation, adoption
11	<i>Botrytis</i> sp.	Leaf vegetables, Onions, Beans, Tomatoes	Biocontrol, <i>Trichoderma</i> spp., green pesticides, induced resistance, elicitor	yes	screening and engineering for field, engineering for protected
12	Oomycetes (<i>Phythium</i> , <i>Phytophthora</i>)	Solanaceae, Carrots, lamb lettuce	Variety resistance, green pesticides, bio-fumigation, soil amendment, forecasting, induced resistance, antagonists	yes	screening, engineering

PBMB: Pest behavior manipulation for biocontrol including sexual pheromones, repellents/attractants, visual or odor confusion for plant location or mating, lures, etc. All products and techniques that can contribute to Biocontrol and have no direct lethal effects as insecticides or acaricides

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Table 4. A final list of the most important common targets for new biocontrol products identified in perennial crops (fruit crops and grapevines) across European countries. This was sorted and ranked from the initial list of 76 pest groups identified during the two-day discussion of the biocontrol workshop. Biocontrol solutions were considered in *sensu lato* taking into account also other alternative control options which are part of IPM such as semiochemicals, fatty acids, botanicals, cultural practices, traps etc. In total, 12 priority pests were identified which were ranked from 1 to 12 in decreasing order of importance. A: screening of new biocontrol agents; B: engineering of biocontrol products; C: Integration of biocontrol agents into IPM strategies, and D: Adoption of biocontrol: bottlenecks and levers at the farm and supply chain levels.

Rank	Pest	Crop(s)	Biocontrol solution under development	Available for use	Type of research needed
1	<i>Drosophila suzukii</i>	all stone & soft fruits, grapes	None	None	biology of the pest; mass trapping; avoidance; parasitoids, repellants, pathogens, sterile insect technology
2	<i>Monilinia</i> sp. (<i>laxa</i> , <i>fructicola</i> , <i>fructigena</i>)	all stone & soft fruit	None	None	A; then B; C would then priority (sanitation would be key – forecast models for timing of application), then D
3	<i>Venturia inaequalis</i>	apple	None	None	A for overwintering inoculum; then B; C would then priority (R varieties, forecast models for timing of application; technology for spraying without tractor), then D
4	<i>Cydia pomonella</i>	apple, pear, walnut	<i>Trichogramma</i> (National project in FR)	Mating disruption; Granulosis virus; <i>Steinernema carpocapse</i> ; sterile insect technique (Canada)	A (e.g. new virus strains), B, C & D (sterile insect technology, physical methods, landscape management & conservation biocontrol)
5	<i>Psylla</i> complex	apple & pear	Kaolin; not widely used	conservation biocontrol for <i>Psylla pyri</i>	A (against vector & endophytes against the phytoplasma); C (repellents / attractants, conservation biocontrol & landscape management)
6	<i>Rhagoletis cerasi</i> + fruit flies	peach, cherry, walnut, apple, citrus, olive	None	None	A (eg for attract & infect/kill; attractants); C & D (SIT, multispecies traps; IP with existing parasitoids, Beauveria, physical protection)
7	Phytophthora complex	strawberry, cane fruit	None	None	A then B; C (biofumigation + "cleaning crops"; detection method for sanitation soil/cuttings)

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8	<i>Verticillium complex</i>	strawberry, hops, cane fruit	None	None	A then B; C (biofumigation + "cleaning crops"; detection method for sanitation soil/cuttings)
9	Powdery mildews	strawberry, cane fruit, grapes	None	None	A, B (improve existing BCAs), C
10	<i>Scaphoideus titanus</i> (Grapevine Flavescence Dorée)	grapes	None	None	A (against the vector and gdf eg endophytes), C (combine BCAs with physical methods-vibration, mating disruption, repellants, avoidance techniques, trapping)
11	<i>Plasmopara viticola</i>	grapes	None	None	A, B, C, D (test with predictive models)
12	<i>Halyomorpha halys</i>	all stone fruit, apple, grapes	None	None	pest biology; A (parasitoids); C (mass trapping, repellents/attractants),

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