

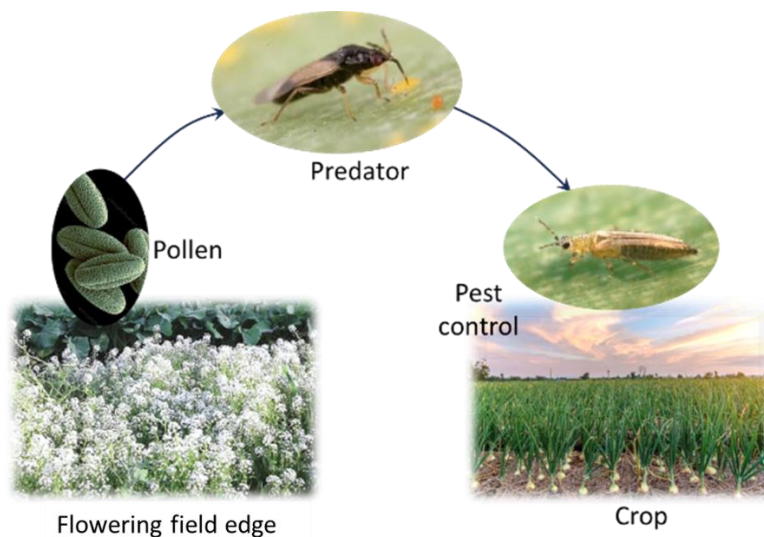
A standing army in the field: combining commercial biocontrol with habitat management for improved pest suppression in open field crops

Natural pest suppression in agro-ecosystems can be strengthened by establishing flowering field edges providing supplementary resources. As such systems depend entirely on the population size and phenology of naturally occurring beneficials, their performance may be at times sub-optimal.

Applying commercially available biological control agents together with supplementary resources may ensure that beneficials are present when needed. Such proposition is not trivial however, as supplementary resources will attract an entire entomofauna that interact with the biological control agents and their prey.

In this project we establish and compare different types of supplementary resource – biocontrol agent systems and explore how they interact with the target pest and the resident insect community in the field. Besides the ecological questions, we answer applied questions, such as “Is it better to deploy a single banker-BCA combination or is it better to use several banker-BCA combinations? What are the practical considerations from the grower’s perspective?”

Are you fascinated by learning about insect ecology, agroecology, and ecosystem services? Do you like to participate in field research? If your answer is yes then feel free to send an email and join our team for your internship!



Thesis / internship: Spring to Summer 2025

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