

# Pest Promotion Through the Cartoon Network

One of the key problems holding back farmers in developing countries is the loss of crops from pests and diseases attack. Preventing these losses in as safe manner brings additional food, income, time and confidence to farmers and provides food for consumers.



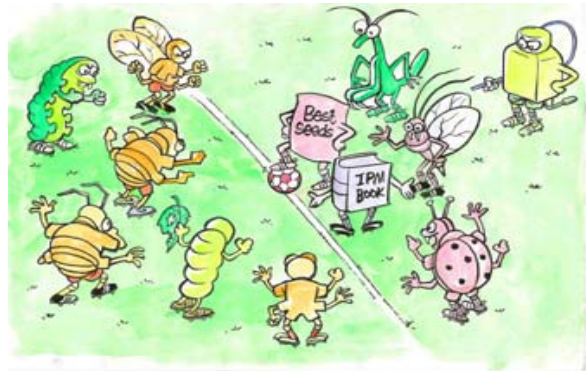
Unfortunately, many farmers believe that using pesticides is the only way to make sure that their crops are healthy and yield well. Researchers have shown that pesticides are most effective when part of a mixed or integrated approach often referred to as integrated pest management (IPM). IPM uses a blend of new and traditional methods such as alternating different crops on the land or selecting disease-resistant varieties. It is a concept that is not quite as simple as routine sprays with pesticide, but one which strikes a resonance with farmers when they begin to understand the sense and cost-savings of the approach. Researchers have, however, found it hard to convey a good understanding of IPM to farmers.

A CPP pilot-dissemination project, led by NRI, in Kenya brought this and other information to farmers in a way that was both understandable and memorable via a training course and a series of visual media, including cartoons – one of these used a football analogy to illustrate IPM. A series of pest management messages were illustrated and incorporated into a calendar, which was very well received by farmers, and elicited comments such as

“Use of cartoons is a unique idea that contributes to refreshing of the mind and grasp concepts better”

“I would have sprayed the ‘farmer’s friends’ [natural enemies] before the course”

Visiting some of the 500 farmers after their training, they smiled as they described the cartoons and explained the serious messages within them. The farmers are now training other farmers using the calendars as training



The motley team of rather fierce looking individuals on the left of the centre line are the pests. The opposing team on the right depict the range of different IPM ways to control them. The IPM book represents the knowledge needed by the farmer to reduce reliance on chemicals. ‘Best seeds’ indicates use of crop varieties with in-built disease resistance that reduce the need for fungicidal sprays to control blights and other crop ailments. The midfield players are natural predators (wasps, mantids and ladybirds) that eat large numbers of insect pests such as aphids, whiteflies and small caterpillars. Pesticides, depicted by the sprayer, are the final line of defence – the goalkeeper.



Farmers appreciating the humour, and the IPM messages, of the Calendar 2005 cartoons

tools thus providing a powerful multiplier for the beneficial impact. This dynamic participatory training is proving much more effective than conventional lecture-based training in achieving changes in practice at the field level. Humour and active involvement help make a fun atmosphere more conducive to effective learning!

**R8341:** Promoting adoption of integrated pest management in vegetable production  
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