



Stimulating implementation of best management practices to reduce pesticide loads to surface water in a small agricultural catchment

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High-quality, safe, and sufficient drinking water is essential for life: we use it for drinking, food preparation and cleaning. Agriculture is the biggest source of pesticides and nitrate pollution in European fresh waters. Pesticide occurrences in rivers result from diffuse runoff from farmland or from point sources from the farmyard. Although many best management practices (BMPs) to mitigate these diffuse and point sources are developed and widely disseminated for several years, the effective implementation of mitigation measures in practice remains limited. Therefore, the Waterprotect project has been set up to improve the knowledge and awareness of the impact of crop protection products on the water quality among the many actors, to identify the bottlenecks for implementation of suitable BMPs and further develop new governance strategies to overcome these issues for a more effective drinking water protection. As all actors share the responsibility to deal with the water quality, government agencies (e.g. environmental agencies), private actors (e.g. drinking water company, input supplier, processing industry) and civil society actors (e.g. farmers) are involved in the project. Processes to cope with the problem are initiated in 7 action labs among which the Belgian Bollaertbeek action lab. The study area is a small agricultural catchment where surface water is used as intake to produce drinking water for the nearby city. The area is sensitive to erosion and based on a physical analysis and risk analysis of the catchment, the implementation of filling and cleaning places on individual farms and buffer strips along the watercourse are proposed as suitable measures to tackle the pollution problem. In order to implement them, mechanisms to increase the involvement of targeted farmers and alternative governance systems are studied. Results of the analysis of the water quality issues and the water governance system in the Belgian Bollaertbeek action lab and the strategies to try to improve the uptake of mitigation measures to improve water quality will be presented.