



In the Hoeksche Waard, south of Rotterdam, a research project was initiated in 2004, jointly with a number of arable farmers, to implement targeted flower margins and assess their impact on natural pest control. The flower species composition was specifically chosen, based on previous research, to support beneficial insects delivering biological pest control and pollination services. Through monitoring it could be shown that beneficial insects were supported and pests were effectively suppressed. By sharing results with the participating farmers, a **90% reduction in insecticide use in potato and wheat crops** was achieved and could be maintained. In a parallel project (ECOSTAC) coordinated by Lancaster University it was established that these targeted flower margins also generated significant yield benefits in several crops.

After the Dutch 5-year project finished, the participating farmers continued and expanded the project by founding a cooperative **Coöperatie Collectief Hoeksche Waard** (CCHW) for the purpose of implementing these and other targeted landscape structures. Currently 84 farmers have joined the cooperative and together they have implemented **500 km of flowering field margins**. There are waiting lists of additional farmers that would like to join.

CCHW works closely with local and national authorities, as well as with the Tourism board, that uses the attractive flower strips to promote the area, i.e. by creating bicycle routes along the flower margins. The CCHW receives regular visits from farmers and farmers organisations throughout Europe that are interested in this model.