

A growers perspective of on-farm trials

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The trial

Comparison of different substrates

Klassman

Klassman + Biochar

Woodchip

Woodchip + biochar



Farmer led trials/research

- Strawberry varieties 1976-1986
- Strawberry mulch materials 1976-1980
- Utilising waste heat from green waste compost 1987
- Compost/substrate mixes 1988-present day
- Green manure mixes for under-sowing 1988-present day
- Onion sets from seed 2009-2011
- Dried berlotti beans in horticultural rotations 2011 ongoing
- Coppice woodfuel production 2007-ongoing
- Winter salads production on woodchip heat 2013
- Bio-fumigation of *Verticillium Dahliae* for strawberry production 2013 (Tozers seeds)



Official trials and research



Green manures overwinter HDRA 1992-4

Over-winter leafy veg-N contents EFRC 1991

Green manures intercropping Univ. of Reading 1991-92

Trials of potato resistant varieties EFRC 1994

Pollinating insects in species rich green manures LegumLINK
ORC 2010-13

Farm business survey Univ of Reading 2012-ongoing

Variety trials Soil Assoc/DOFF 2013

Plant substrate trials Soil Asso. ORC. DOFF (Fieldlab) 2014

Agro-forestry establishment ORC/Woodland Trust 2014 onwards

The crops

- Leek
- Summer cabbage



What are we looking at?

Plant growth-germination, size, p+d problems,
final yield

Watering regime

Handling characteristics

Costs



Trial Design

- Fit available space
- Equipment needs
- Labour input
- Watering
- Ventilation



Setting up the trial

- Trial design
- Plan
- Preparation
- Sowing
- Lables

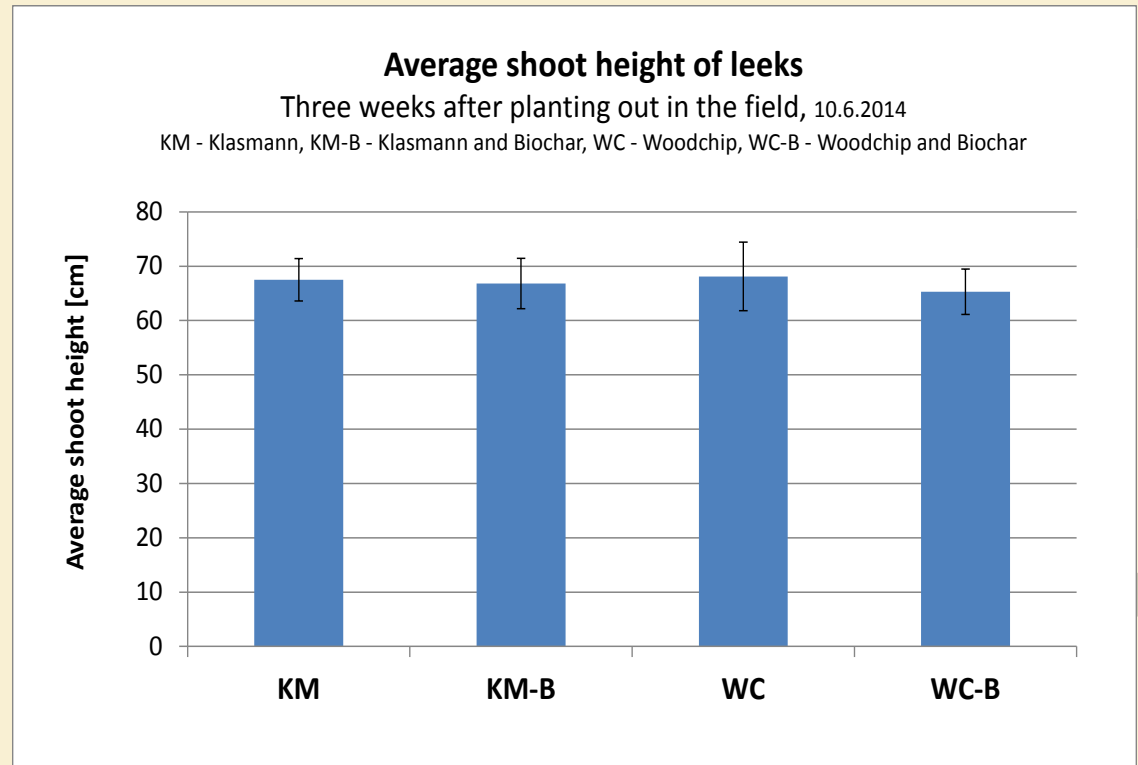


Trial modifications



Measure and monitor

- Germination
- Plant survival
- Growth rates
- Yield quality
- P+D



Challenges

- Timeliness
- Monitoring
- Labour
- Recording



Field labs

- Involve growers
- Information exchange
- Networking

