COSTS OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL COMPONENTS IN INTEGRATED PLANT PROTECTION IN GLASSHOUSES IN THE NETHERLANDS

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ABSTRACT. Progress in integrated pest management (IPM) is usually assessed in terms of the number of growers adopting the method, the acreage on which IPM is applied, or the quantities of natural enemies released. Such parameters are useful for indicating trends, but do not reflect the actual significance of biological control as a tool for controlling pests in commercial horticulture. The costs of biological control agents as a fraction of total plant protection costs has been suggested as a still not perfect but better indicator. Horticultural statistics, however, often treat plant protection as a single cost factor and seldom separate biological from chemical control costs. This paper deals with the motivations of greenhouse growers for choosing integrated control as a strategy in the first place. For some important crops, the amount of money spent on both chemical and biological control agents was monitored over a number of years. The tension between chemical and biological control, which can be either competing and conflicting or complementary and mutually supporting, is discussed.