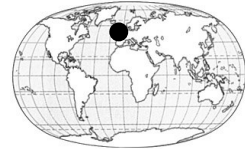


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THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN LEGISLATION ON THE BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF WEEDS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE UK

Although European nations are amongst world leaders in the use of biological control agents to control insect pests in protected crops, their application to invasive weeds has so far been largely overlooked, though this is changing. One of the reasons for this delay is the complex and restrictive primary legislation and its interpretation and application by member states. This paper considers the practical use of both classical and inundative biocontrol against invasive weeds. Using the on-going classical biocontrol programme against Japanese knotweed as a case study, the regulatory challenges facing the practitioner are considered. This situation is discussed in the light of widely-used international guidelines and stated policy to reduce pesticide use. The current problems, especially those relating to micro-organisms, are highlighted and some potential solutions are proposed. The conclusion is drawn that many of the applicable regulations were not drafted with classical biocontrol in mind and are likely to continue to hinder the use of this sustainable approach to weed management.

keywords: biological control, weeds, legislation, regulation