What is “habitat potential” for biodiversity?

- Habitat potential (HP) is a concept that defines and quantifies the ecological benefits of land management decisions at the farm scale.
- Habitat potential can be quantified for individual farms through the calculation of a Habitat Potential Index (HPI).
- Allows the user to evaluate implications concerning production and land management decisions .
- The HPI can be used in benchmarking the performance of the individual farm for individual land covers or over the whole farm.
- Value to Grower- reinforces productivity and educational opportunities
- The approach highlights protection and preservation of existing land cover/habitat as well as rationale intensification of cultivated areas to mitigate further loss of habitat.

Principles for "Getting Started on Biodiversity" by assessing the Habitat Potential on the Farm

- Land use change (habitat loss) is major driver of biodiversity
- Focus on status of farm today and not a "prior to agriculture" pristine ecosystem
- Aligned to LCA Methodology (Management Change)
- Land cover, land use, land quality, and land management decisions utilized as indicators of conservation potential
- The proposed HPI metric emphasizes a simple, semi-quantitative approach
- HPI metric is doable in the short term; practical and easy to implement