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Introduction

The starting point of this book is that insecticides (and miticides and molluscicides) are the currently accepted best practice in dealing with pests in broadacre crops and pastures. Farmers have been asked simply to match up the pest and the pesticide, whether this involves a weed or disease, an insect or a mite. The standard practice does not require much knowledge of pest species as it merely entails the selection of a broad-spectrum pesticide that deals with a range of pests. That is, a farmer asking an adviser (government or private) how to control a pest is likely to receive a pesticide recommendation and – what is more important – is likely to *expect* such a recommendation. This is exactly the same situation facing medical doctors who deal with people expecting pharmaceutical prescriptions to be given following consultations.

Despite this being current standard practice, it is a relatively recent approach to pest management (in historical terms) and is not something that is likely to result in the sustainable control of pests. We can say this because, where reliance upon pesticides alone has been employed, pesticide resistance has led to control failures. There are many examples from horticultural experience to illustrate the problems associated with heavy reliance on pesticides, the same problem that broadacre farmers now face, but the horticultural experience also suggests the likely answers.

Integrated Pest Management or 'IPM' is not a new concept to entomologists (people who study insects) but it is also not a common tool used by most broadacre farmers. The development and implementation of IPM in broadacre cropping and pastures is in its infancy in Australia, and the situation is similar throughout most of the world. There is sufficient information to allow interested farmers to put IPM into practice but realistically this will occur where there is collaboration with