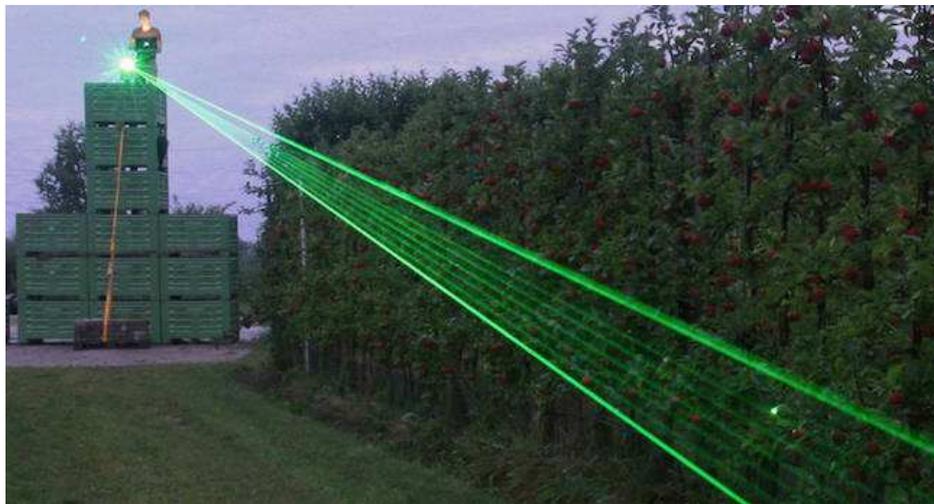


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Science

LASER RAT FENCE wins €1.7m European Commission funds

Liverpool John Moores University thinks crop-munching pests deserve light relief, not poison. Or Brexit, presumably



Agrilaser in action

26 Oct 2016 at 06:56, [Simon Sharwood](#)

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The European Commission (EC) has found €1,777,985 for research on rat-repelling laser fences.

The thinking behind the "LIFE Laser Fence" is that birds and rodents chew on plenty of crops, which costs farmers money and reduce productivity. Plenty of farmers fight back using poisons which do the job, but can also prove fatal for other creatures and work their way into the wider food chain. Birds can also figure out traps, and avoid them.

The "LIFE Laser Fence" program aims to test a technology called "Agrilaser Autonomic" that sees an automated laser detect birds and other critters, then shine bright light in their direction. Birds **apparently** "perceive the approaching laser beam as a physical danger" and therefore go away instead of stopping to munch on crops.

The Bird Control Group, Agrilaser's maker, markets the device as a bird-repellent, but the [project outline](#) says the LIFE Laser Fence aims to deter all sorts of animals and sets avoiding "1,620 kg of rodenticide use over three years" as a desired outcome.

Dr Alex Mason of Liverpool John Moores University is leading the project, with the University's sensor technologies researchers involved to help target undesirable beasts. The EC's money, part of the project's €3,135,928 budget, is expected to help Mason and colleagues to "... experiment with new techniques and test on a larger scale for even more potential."

Which sounds like the Euro-cash is going to help figure out how to focus bird-lasers on *rattus rattus* and other creepy-crawlies.

And to think that once Britain Brexits, this sort of thing won't be possible any more. ©

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