



EU MINOR USES COORDINATION FACILITY

Newsletter

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Minor uses, major issue!



Insects. You can love them or hate them, but one way or the other they play an important role in your life. Insects are the cornerstone of nature! However a recent major study in Germany confirmed that the number of insects has decreased dramatically over the past 30 years.

Insects are essential for pollination. Without insects flowers, crops and trees cannot reproduce. Insectivorous insects, birds and mammals are affected by the decline of insect populations. Agriculture plays a role in the decrease of insects. But farmers can also play a positive role and create green strips alongside agricultural plots for example to allow wild flowers to grow and thus creating a habitat for beneficial insects.



These are all measures that can be part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy. On 14 March the Minor Uses Coordination Facility held a plenary session on IPM. With modern techniques and the use of 'big data' precision agriculture with targeted applications is possible. The European Commission highlighted the initiatives they are taking to make IPM strategies mandatory and to make it part of EU-legislation. Industry indicated that IPM programmes combining conventional and biopesticides for minor uses are already a reality.

Brussels was again the place to be for European minor uses experts! From 13-15 March more than 110 people gathered in the Square Meeting Centre to have in depth discussions on minor uses issues. And there is still a lot to discuss. And a new Chair of the Horizontal Expert Group has been elected. Who? You can read it in this newsletter, as well as short reports from the different Commodity Expert Groups.

A drafting group is working hard on a Guidance Document for Minor Uses on the implementation of Article 51 and other provisions in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 related to minor uses.

We already have made considerable progress and a next meeting is planned for mid-April. More details can be found in this newsletter.

Already 13 Member States have expressed their interest to co-fund the Minor Uses Coordination Facility. The funding for 2018 has been guaranteed. These Member States are invited in early April to Brussels to meet with the current Steering Group to discuss future arrangements.

Now that spring is slowly arriving consider greening your garden and sowing some flowers in your gardens or on your balconies to give insects a chance!

Jeroen Meeussen, Coordinator of the MUCF

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Continuity of the MUCF- long-term funding

The grant agreement with the European Commission and the governments of Germany, France and the Netherlands regarding the funding of the EU Minor Uses Coordination Facility (MUCF) for the first three years expires on 15 April 2018. Last November the MUCF approached Member States with a request for a voluntary assessed contribution for the remaining period of 2018, and for the years to come. Already twelve Member States and Switzerland, responded positively to this request!

The Steering Group currently comprises all of the four funders, plus the Director-General of EPPO. It always has been the intention that new funders should also take part in the governance of the Coordination Facility. In the next Steering Group meeting, on 4-5 April 2018, future arrangements will be discussed for a Steering Group to be appointed by the whole body of funders. Another important point of discussion will be the way forward for the MUCF in 5 years' time.



Although the funding for 2018 has been guaranteed, the funding for 2019 and beyond is still unsecure. But we are hopeful that we will also receive sufficient funding for the years to come to ensure the continuity of the MUCF.



The MUCF is co-funded by the European Union

Second Stakeholder Advisory Forum

The Second Stakeholder Advisory Forum of the MUCF took place on 6 February 2018 in Brussels. The event was, as in 2017, well attended with around 50 stakeholders from a diverse range of Member States and organizations.

The MUCF achieved a lot in 2017. Newsletters have been issued quarterly, the new EUMUDA was launched and is operational. The MUCF organised two series of Expert Group meetings that were well attended, by participants from more than 20 Member States. The MUCF has actively been involved in the REFIT. The MUCF attended the Third Global Minor Use Summit and is following up on the conclusions and recommendations of the event.

In 2018 the MUCF will continue to work on guaranteeing its sustainable long-term funding. Since its creation in 2015, the functioning of the MUCF has been guaranteed through a fund co-financed by the European Commission (50%) and a consortium of three Member States (France, Germany, the Netherlands, together 50%). The financing from the European Commission will expire in April 2018. In November 2017, the MUCF approached the Member States with a request for a voluntary assessed contribution based on their population size. At the time of the Stakeholder Advisory Forum, the MUCF received contributions or commitments from 9 Member States and Switzerland. For 2018, the funding has been secured, but for 2019 the situation is unclear.

In the short, mid-term and long-term, the MUCF will continue to develop the operational work with the Expert Groups and the cooperation at EU and international level.

As seen during the Panel (small group) discussion, the stakeholders aim for more harmonization in Europe, be it for the definition of minor uses, or harmonization in evaluations, crop groups or extrapolation rules, or in granting authorisations. The MUCF can play an important role towards harmonization.



Panel discussion

From the expectations and needs of different stakeholders, and the activities and achievements of the MUCF, it is clear that the added value brought by the MUCF is acknowledged by all of the involved stakeholders.

IPM and minor uses

As part of the March CEG meeting the Coordination Facility held a plenary session on Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

The European Commission, represented by Denis de Froidmont (DG AGRI), indicated the initiatives and legislation put into place by the EU to promote IPM strategies. The Sustainable Use Directive has many provisions related to IPM. Member States should promote low pesticide input and give priority to non-chemical methods. Another obligation for Member States is to ensure the availability of information, tools and advisory services on IPM. All Member States have prepared National Action Plans in which they describe how to ensure that the general principles of IPM are implemented in their Member State. Two examples were given on how Member States certify, enforce and/or assess the level of IPM implementation. In Italy, the National Quality Integrated Production System is a voluntary scheme. Annual inspections are performed at certified operators by approved Control Bodies. Certification may be granted after checking that IPM principles and specific IPM measures are applied during the growing season and post-harvest. In Denmark, there is an online tool available for growers to assess their level of IPM implementation (questionnaire with points allocated for good IPM practices).



*Mr de Froidmont, representative from DG AGRI
(European Commission)*

Jeannette Vriend (LTO, the Netherlands) highlighted the principles of IPM using thrips in ornamentals as an example. The 8 IPM principles are: 1. prevention, 2. monitoring, 3. decision making, 4. non-chemical methods, 5. use pesticides as specific as possible for the target, 6. limit the use of pesticides to levels that are necessary, 7. anti-resistance strategies, and 8. learn and optimize.

Henk Decraecke (Phytofar) indicated the IPM strategies for minor uses in Belgium. There are a lot of challenges in combatting pests (including diseases), but there are also several solutions available. Cornerstones for successful IPM implementation in Belgium are the availability of a sustainable plant protection toolbox for the farmers. The use of seed treatment is a valuable method to reduce the amount of pesticides used. Related to the first two IPM-principles are the fact that pesticide users should have a better knowledge of pests and diseases, and that this knowledge should be linked to (web based) warning systems. Demonstration farms and efficient communication can contribute to a better understanding and acceptance of IPM strategies.

Certis Europe, represented by Jennifer Lewis, indicated that IPM programmes combining conventional and biorational pesticides for minor uses are already used in practice. Minor crops can be a significant part of the market. Examples where Certis Europe integrated biorational and conventional PPPs are in the production of cucumbers in Spain and cucurbits in Italy. Growers are now more ready to follow a programme that includes biorationals, but the reliability and efficacy of pest (including disease) control must be proven and the marketable yield must be maintained (quantity, quality and residue levels).

With modern techniques and the use of 'big data' precision agriculture with target applications is possible. This will reduce the amount of pesticides used. Vik Vandecaveye (CNH Industrial, Belgium) indicated that digital farming allows optimized farm operations and improved production processes. Benefits of digital farming in practice are also that the farmer can react immediately to unpredictable events.

All together it was a valuable session where IPM was looked at from different angles and most important examples show that IPM is actively implemented in EU Member States.

Spring minor uses expert meetings

The spring meetings of the Commodity Expert Groups (CEG) and Horizontal Expert Group (HEG) took place again in Brussels, on 13 to 15 March 2018.

Around 110 participants from more than 20 Member States gathered over the three days. This year the MUCF was pleased to also welcome a representative of DG AGRI. A plenary session dedicated to Integrated Pest Management (IPM) took place on the morning of 14 March. See the article on IPM on this page.

In view of the March meetings, the MUCF had organised in January- February 2018 an updated survey to Member States on their minor uses needs and priorities.

The MUCF presented the results to each of the CEGs. Results are available from 13 Member States. Responses from 7 additional Member States needed further clarification or were pending. Eventually, it is expected that responses from 20 Member States will be used as a basis to establish work plans for the CEGs. The MUCF will make the Member States needs and priorities available in EUMUDA in the near future.

In the meeting of the **CEG Fruits and Vegetables**, a lot of Member States were represented. Experts presented an update on the ongoing projects. Overall, projects concern insects such as thrips and spotted wing drosophila on fruits, weeds in vegetables, and downy mildew on vegetables and basil. Currently there are 60 projects from the CEG Fruits and Vegetables entered in EUMUDA, out of 73 projects in total.

Ms Koch from Germany highlighted the issue on a requirement of an MRL for radish leaves although leaves are usually not consumed. The CEG organized again a joint session with the CEG Seeds, where biological seed treatments were discussed.



Ingeborg Koch (Germany)

The **CEG Seeds** concluded that the situation for seed treatment is a serious concern. Several broad-spectrum fungicides have lost their approval at EU level or might lose their approval in the near future, while new chemical or biological alternatives rarely become available, especially for minor crops. Authorization procedures are complicated and not well harmonized: the CEG Seeds therefore calls upon the MUCF to facilitate the authorization of seed treatment products for minor uses through the Guidance Document on Minor Uses that is under development. The CEG Seeds members will continue their contacts with the crop protection industry in order to continue and start EU projects on chemical and biological solutions for soil- and seed-borne diseases.

Furthermore, most active ingredients used as insecticide seed treatments are under discussion at EU level, and the CEG Seeds consider that it is unlikely that new actives will become available for this specific use. This was shared with the CEG Fruits & Vegetables, and noted that it is necessary to look for alternative solutions for flies, aphids, etc.

For seed production developments in authorizations were shared and trials carried out in vegetables, grasses, alfalfa and beet seed production were presented. The research involves screening for effective herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and desiccants, but also for example mechanical weeding practices. Results will be shared amongst members in more depth, and possible joint projects will be formulated.

Last but not least, some important seed producing countries, such as Italy, Hungary and Denmark, are not yet represented in the CEG Seeds and would be most welcome to participate!

The **CEG Mushrooms** appointed Ms Margarita Perez as co-Chair. The group agreed to initiate a project concerning Luna privilege (Fluopyram) in order to control the pathogen *Dactylium dendroides* in mushroom production, which has been set as the top priority both by the experts and the recent survey conducted by MUCF. Ms Perez from the CTICH, Spanish technical center for mushrooms will be the project leader. The residue trials will be conducted by Belgium (1 trial), Spain (1 trial) and France (2 trials). The optimal dose of application has still to be refined by a trial taken in charge by the CTC, French technical center which will also do a first evaluation of the residue in both mushrooms and spent compost.

The **CEG Hops** appointed a new Chair and co-Chair. The new Chair is Florian Weihrauch (Germany) and new co-Chair is Magda Rak-Cizej (Slovenia). The election period is only one year exceptionally, in order to get back to the 'normal' rhythm of election period. Next elections will be in spring 2019.

Two new projects on two spotted spider mite *Tetranychus urticae* led by Slovenia and France respectively will be added to EUMUDA, underlining that this mite is the top priority of European hop cultivation. Leaf Wall Area (LWA) has to be implemented as new reference value for all efficacy trials in hops within the EU already in 2018; a sound transition from surface area as the currently used reference value has to be developed quickly by a 'LWA task force' for hops. The status of the Hop MRL from South Korea after 1st January 2019 is currently top priority of lobby work of CEG Hops.

The next meeting of CEG Hops will be convened in the last week of October 2018 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, including a visit to the hop growing area and the Slovenian Institute for Hop Research and Brewing in Žalec.

On 14 March there was an informative meeting of the **CEG Ornamentals** concerning some important products for which authorizations are expected in the coming years. First Nufarm informed the members about the thrips product Nocturn and other Nufarm/Sumitomo products; Certis showed results and future plans for a soil disinfection product, and Dow gave information about a new product for aphid control and the situation of the soil disinfection product Telone.

Finally the MUCF presented multiple information in addition to results of the survey on minor uses needs: EPPO classification ornamentals and of weeds, and provided an online demonstration on how to enter minor uses needs and projects in EUMUDA.

The **CEG Tobacco** focused its meeting on the renewal of active substances and the new projects. For the active ingredient renewal (AIR) programme, some active substances are or will be withdrawn in 2018: iprodione, maneb, picoxystrobin. The future situation for some other active substances, especially neonicotinoids, is unclear.

Some new registrations were reported in France and Italy: Limocide/ Essen'ciel (in France, against blue mold, thrips, powdery mildew and whiteflies), Lieto (in Italy, against blue mold) and Avana (in Italy, for suckers' control). 31 new projects cover a number of pests, such as aphids, caterpillar, nematods, blue mold diseases, sclerotinia disease and the weed broomrape. They are led by at least 6 countries.

The last day of the meetings was dedicated to the **Horizontal Expert Group (HEG)**. A new Chair was elected, Mr Donal Lynch, from Ireland (see page 7). Mr Lynch will, according to the terms of references of the HEG, be Chair for three years. Mr Meeussen from the MUCF is the Co-chair.

Feedback on activities of the MUCF (long-term funding, survey on minor uses priorities, EUMUDA, etc.) was provided. Also, a proposal on a harmonized definition of minor uses was discussed. The MUCF will follow up on this subject in the frame of the Working Group on the Guidance Document on Minor Uses and will keep the HEG members informed.

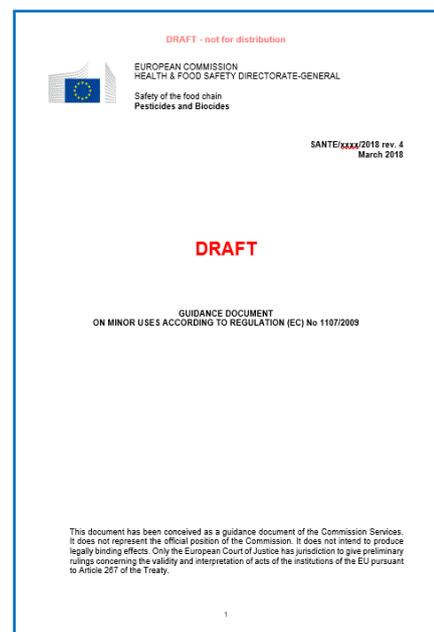
Guidance Document on Minor Uses

One of the main reasons that growers are facing difficulties in gaining authorization for 'minor uses' is the extensive data packages required for authorization to market plant protection products. Specific provisions regarding minor uses are laid down in Article 51 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009. Other incentives are related to extended data protection. Minor uses need to be considered when applying comparative assessment.

Although in general the application for an extension for minor uses according to Article 51 follows the same (zonal) procedure as other applications, there are currently differences in the situation of implementation of the minor use provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 and this creates uncertainty and divergence between Member States. Whilst different approaches may be consistent with the Regulation, greater harmonisation would support the authorisation of minor uses on a national and zonal level.

Clarification is therefore needed to facilitate the practical implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 and to reduce the obstacles for mutual recognition of minor uses between Member States and other impediments. Hence, it is considered necessary to develop a 'Guidance Document on Minor Uses' on the implementation of Article 51 and other provisions related to minor uses. Such guidance should encourage Member States to take a consistent approach in the evaluation of dossiers and in the use of the risk envelope approach.

This Guidance Document will be developed for applicants (industry as well as growers' associations) to clarify the different steps to be taken from a crop-pest need to a solution, to harmonize registration procedures and to clarify the provisions of Article 51 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 and of other provisions relevant for minor uses. The Guidance Document will consist of two parts. After a general introduction, the first part will describe the process from the identification of a need to the successful generation of data. The second part of this document will be dedicated to regulatory issues in applying for an (extension of an) authorisation of a plant protection product.



The drafting Group consists of representatives from Member States, ECPA, IBMA, Copa-Cocega, and the MUCF. The next meeting of the drafting group is scheduled for April 2018. After this meeting it is envisaged to have a draft ‘Guidance Document on Minor Uses’ that can be circulated to all Member States and stakeholders for commenting. This commenting period should preferably be followed by a discussion in the Post Approval Issues group in June 2018. Depending on the comments received, it may be needed to schedule further discussions and meetings of the drafting group.

Note taking of this guidance document by the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed will establish a level of legal certainty on the interpretation of Article 51 and other provision in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 dealing with ‘minor uses’.

EPPO Codes, crops and pests classification

The EPPO Codes and non-taxonomic classification (or grouping) of crops and pests are issues of interest for minor uses work, particularly for EUMUDA. It is also of interest for PPPAMS, the plant protection product application management system set by the European Commission.

EPPO taxonomic codes are letters (occasionally with numbers) assigned to plant and pest organisms at species level or higher taxonomic levels. These unique codes are determined from the scientific name of organisms, according to specific EPPO rules. For example, the code for black currant *Ribes nigrum* is RIBNI and for the whitefly *Bemisia tabaci* is BEMITA. EPPO non-taxonomic Codes include crop groups (or pest groups) which make sense from a plant protection (efficacy) point of view. For example, the non-taxonomic group ‘umbelliferous vegetables crops’ coded 3UMRC, includes carrot, parsnip and celeriac.

On 5 to 7 March 2018, the EPPO Panel on Data Harmonization met in EPPO headquarters in Paris. This Panel meets annually and covers issues related to data harmonization in order to facilitate communication and regulatory data exchange on plant protection products. One of its tasks is to elaborate a harmonized classification of non-taxonomic Codes to describe uses of plant protection products. The non-taxonomic classification of ornamentals, as well as of weeds and pests were on the agenda.

Prior to the Panel meeting, the MUCF had asked members of the CEG ornamentals to comment on the proposal for **ornamentals classification** made by a member of the EPPO Panel, from the Netherlands. Feedback was received from a number of Member States and Switzerland. Mr Jacob from France attended the Panel on behalf of the CEG Ornamentals. During the meeting it was highlighted that the classification should be kept simple. It was concluded to have four main groups: herbaceous plants; woody plants; cactuses and succulents; and aquatic plants.

For each main group an explanation about the types of plants covered and examples of species will be given. It was agreed that qualifiers can address the need to identify specific situations, e.g. ‘cut flowers’ and ‘pot plants’ can be distinguished using a qualifier.



Tulips field

CEG Ornamentals can contact the MUCF in case of further information needed or comments. The MUCF will then liaise with the EPPO Secretariat.

For weeds, Member States have previously mentioned to the MUCF that it is not easy to specify weeds at species level and that using groups would facilitate the work e.g. when declaring minor uses needs. The EPPO Panel on Data Harmonization agreed on a relatively simple **weeds classification**, which was then shared with the EPPO Panel on Herbicides and Plant Growth Regulators (which met on 13-15 March 2018) for finalisation of the proposal. The main groups agreed are: dicotyledonous weeds, monocotyledonous weeds (including sub-groups for annual and perennial grasses), algae, mosses, ferns, lichens, aquatic weeds, woody weeds, parasitic plants.

Both the ornamentals and the weeds classification will then be proposed to the EPPO Working Party on Plant Protection Products for approval (23 to 25 May 2018) before being published on the EPPO Global Database.

For insect pests and diseases, similar issues as for weeds were reported by some Member States to the MUCF. For some insects (thrips and aphids), and some diseases, more than one species could be on the same crop and using groups would be preferred. The Panel on Data Harmonization prepared an initial draft proposal of **classification for insect pests** and will seek for further expertise to work on this issue as well as for diseases. Minor uses experts can contact the MUCF on this matter as well.

It should be noted that when weeds, insect pests or diseases groups are used, also indicator (important) species will need to be mentioned by the minor uses experts when identifying minor uses needs, or when entering projects in EUMUDA.

The MUCF will follow-up on this subject. More information on EPPO activities and minor uses can be found here https://www.eppo.int/PPP/PRODUCTS/minor_uses/minor_uses.htm

REFIT activities

The REFIT programme (Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme) is organised by the European Commission to see if existing legislation is (still) fit for purpose, and to improve existing EU legislation. After the first stakeholder meeting, on which we reported in the previous newsletter, the consultant Ecorys organised an on-line survey for Member States and stakeholders. The MUCF participated in the stakeholder survey.

In March the MUCF participated in a FOCUS Group. This was a small group with a limited number of member States issues discussed related to the authorisation of plant protection products, including minor uses. This will be followed by an interview with the MUCF to highlight the minor uses issues.

The report from the consultant is expected to be delivered to the European Commission by the end of May/early June 2018.

New Chair of the Horizontal Expert Group!

Following Johan Roman's resignation the meeting elected Donal Lynch from Ireland as the new Chair of the Horizontal Expert Group for the next three years



Donal Lynch (Ireland)

Donal has an agricultural background, is a farmer and is also currently working with the Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. For the last 14 years he has worked with the Pesticide Registration and Control Division, which is the competent authority for plant protection products (PPPs) and biocides in Ireland. Among other things, Donal is currently responsible for all minor use issues including all applications (Article 51) received in Ireland.

Donal's goals as Chair of the HEG are:

- He will continue to chair the HEG with pragmatism, with a particular focus on practical problem solving.
- As he has handled Mutual Recognition applications from Member States across all zones, he will use this experience to be mindful and cognisant of different needs and priorities of all Member States.
- He will aim always to work towards building consensus within the group.
- Through his involvement and participation in the Post Approvals Issues Working Group, he will ensure that Minor Use problems are given real consideration at these meetings.
- Having built a vast experience of the EU regulatory systems, Donal would like to focus on simplification and harmonisation of processes to solve minor use needs among all Member States.

We are confident that Donal will be a knowledgeable and pragmatic Chair and we wish him good luck.

OECD-meetings

The meeting of the OECD Expert Group on Biopesticides (EGBP) will be held on 19 June 2018 at the OECD Headquarters in Paris. A joint session with the Expert Group on Minor Uses (EGMU) will take place on the morning of 20 June. In the afternoon the EGMU will meet.

The EGBP meeting will follow a one-day seminar at the same venue on "Test methods for micro-organisms" on 18 June 2018.

Delegates from OECD Member countries must register for OECD-meetings via their OECD Permanent Delegations.

CEG- HEG 2018 autumn meetings

Our Austrian minor uses colleagues have offered to host the autumn minor uses expert meetings in Vienna. We are very grateful for their offer and are pleased to organise the MUCF meetings in their capital. The meetings will take place from 10 to 12 October 2018. We are currently in the process of defining which Commodity Expert Groups will meet there. Keep an eye on our website for the latest developments!

Any question or comments on the newsletter? Contact Flora Limache at contact@minoruses.eu