

>>> NEWSLETTER <<<

EUROPEAN MINOR USES COORDINATION FACILITY**Minor uses, major importance.****TOP NEWS****SPRING
EDITION**

By the MUCF team

>>> **DEAR MUCF COMMUNITY**

With spring in full bloom and summer ahead, the MUCF team wishes all our readers a successful and productive season!

READ MORE <<<

In this 22nd edition of our newsletter, we present highlights from the Spring 2025 expert group meetings, recent developments in the regulatory framework and scientific landscape, and a preview of upcoming activities and events. We trust you will find this edition both informative and thought-provoking.



Warm regards,
The MUCF Team



»»» MUCF AUTUMN MEETINGS 2025

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The MUCF Autumn Meetings are scheduled to take place in person from the 28th to the 30th of October 2025 in Munich, Germany. These meetings will be co-hosted by the German Herbs and Spices Growers Association, and we express our sincere gratitude for their support in facilitating these meetings. The provisional schedule is as follows:

CEGS, REEG AND HEG AUTUMN 2025 MEETING SCHEDULE

MARK YOUR
CALENDARS!



Residues Expert Group (ReEG): October 28th, 2025 | 09:30–12:30

Horizontal Expert Group (HEG): October 28th, 2025 | 13:30–17:30

CEG Fruits & Vegetables: October 29th, 2025 | 09:30–15:00

CEG Hops, Session 1: October 29th, 2025 | 11:00–15:00,

CEG Tobacco: October 29th, 2025 | 09:30–15:00

CEG Ornamentals: October 30th, 2025 | 10:30–17:30

CEG Hops, session 2: October 30th, 2025 | 10:30–17:30

CEG Seeds: October 30th, 2025 | 10:30–17:30

CEG Herbs and Spices: October 30th, 2025 | 10:30–17:30

CEG Mushrooms: the Autumn meeting will be held online, date still to be decided.

CEG Rice: The chair position for this group is still vacant. No meetings are planned until this post is filled.

Further details and final agendas will be shared in due course.

We look forward to your participation in these meetings!

»»» MUCF SPRING MEETINGS 2025

The Spring 2025 meetings were conducted online in **March** and **April**, bringing together experts from various sectors to discuss challenges and advances in minor uses. Key points from each group, along with participation overview and updates on the current Chair(s) and co-Chair(s), are provided hereafter.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS



These expert groups continue to play a pivotal role in addressing minor use challenges, driving European collaboration, and working together to find new crop protection solutions for minor uses.

Follow the [MUCF on LinkedIn](#) to stay up-to-date with the latest MUCF updates and upcoming events.

#MinorUsesMajorImportance and #LetsTalkAbout MinorUses





2025-03-18



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co-Chair: Theodora Nikolopoulou (GR): Vegetables session

co-Chair: Alice McGlynn (IE): Fruits session

co-Chair: Peter Hartvig (DK): Weeds session

Nesidiocoris tenuis, a friend turned foe

Ms **Jeannette Vriend** (NL) gave a presentation dedicated to *Nesidiocoris tenuis*. Commonly known as the tobacco capsid, it has long been employed as a biological control agent in tomato crops across several countries in the EU, particularly for managing *Tuta absoluta* and whiteflies. Closely related to *Macrolophus pygmaeus*, another widely adopted biocontrol species, *N. tenuis* is more prevalent in southern Europe than *M. pygmaeus* due to its greater tolerance to elevated temperatures.

However, in recent years, *N. tenuis* has increasingly demonstrated phytophagous behaviour, inflicting direct damage on tomato crops. Notably, it has been associated with necrotic rings on tomato heads, resulting from feeding punctures. Its biological resemblance to *Macrolophus* species complicates targeted control measures, as interventions risk killing its beneficial counterpart unintentionally. Consequently, imbalanced suppression strategies may inadvertently promote secondary pest outbreaks.



N. tenuis, Copyright: © Koppert Biological Systems. All Rights Reserved.

Ongoing trials in Belgium aim to identify effective strategies to mitigate *N. tenuis* population. This issue will be further addressed in upcoming expert group discussions. It is worth noting that *N. tenuis* has been officially recognised as a pest in countries such as France for over a decade and is not listed in the [EPPO Standard PM 6/3 \(5\)](#). 'Biological control agents safely used in the EPPO Region'.



Managing Caterpillar Infestations in Indoor Vegetable Production

In recent years, indoor vegetable production systems in Europe, particularly for crops such as lettuce and tomato, have faced challenges in controlling caterpillar infestations. These difficulties have been worsened by the effects of climate change and the withdrawal of authorised active substances, both selective and broad-spectrum.

Several biological and operational factors contribute to the severity of the issue: caterpillars exhibit a broad host range, coupled with an extremely low damage threshold, especially in lettuce crops. The rapid life cycles of these pests further complicate control efforts, often allowing populations to increase rapidly under favourable conditions.

Current management strategies are limited. *Bacillus*-based biopesticides remain the cornerstone of control methods but require frequent application. Physical exclusion methods, such as mesh screening of greenhouse openings, offer some protection but are expensive and have potential impacts on internal climate regulation. Recent innovations include automated camera systems capable of detecting and identifying specific moth species in real time, allowing for a rapid response.

Biological control agents such as *Macrolophus pygmaeus* and *Trichogramma* spp. may offer some efficacy, though their performance in lettuce remains limited. Meanwhile, mating-disruption pheromone technologies are under active investigation in the Netherlands, with some already in use for tomato crops. The search for robust, sustainable, and crop-specific solutions remains a priority in the context of increasingly constrained chemical control options.



T. absoluta caterpillar, Copyright: © CABI. All Rights Reserved.

Popillia japonica, commonly known as the Japanese beetle, is an invasive pest of increasing concern across Europe. First detected in northern Italy in 2014, the species now occupies an estimated 16 000 km² in that region, with additional isolated populations reported in Switzerland and Slovenia. Its highly polyphagous nature and aggressive feeding behaviour pose significant risks to a wide range of crops.

It is currently listed on the [EPPO A2 list](#), recommending the member countries to regulate the listed pests as quarantine pests.



P. japonica, Copyright: © IPM-Popillia consortium. All Rights Reserved.

Copyright: © EPPO All Rights Reserved.

Damage assessments presented by Ms **Alice McGlynn** (Ireland) highlighted the severity of the threat: yield losses can reach up to 60% in blueberries, 20% in vineyards, and cause approximately 10% defoliation in apple orchards ([EFSA document](#) 'Popillia japonica Pest Report to support the ranking of EU candidate priority pests'). The pest's rapid spread and capacity for substantial economic impact underscores the urgent need for coordinated control strategies.

To address this challenge, several initiatives have been launched, including the Integrated Pest Management ([IPM](#))-[Popillia consortium](#) and its accompanying digital tool, the IPM App (more information can be found [here](#)). Presented by Mr **Philipp Hummer**, the app integrates artificial intelligence for species identification with geospatial and environmental data collection. It also enables plant health services to access national-level data, supports integration with existing monitoring frameworks, and facilitates citizen science through photographic submissions.

This tool exemplifies a modern, data-driven approach to early detection and coordinated response, offering promising support in the containment and management of *P. japonica* across affected regions.

Mr Per Kudsk of [Aarhus University](#) (Denmark) presented findings from the 2019 ENDURE survey, which aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of glyphosate usage across Europe. The results revealed that glyphosate accounts for approximately 33% of total herbicide sales in the European Union, with an average application rate of 0.23 kg/ha.

While glyphosate ([currently approved](#) as an active substance in the EU until the 15th of December 2033 - use is subject to certain conditions and restrictions) remains a cornerstone of weed management in many cropping systems, its use continues to be the subject of public scrutiny. In parallel, the withdrawal of key herbicides, most recently Metribuzin in February 2025, has increased pressure on growers to identify effective alternatives, particularly for pre- and post-emergence control in crops such as carrots.

Ongoing field trials in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway have explored several potential replacements. Among the most promising chemical alternatives are Diflufenican, Aclonifen, Prosulfocarb, Clomazone, and Pyridate. These trials aim not only to identify effective solutions but also to evaluate their environmental and agronomic compatibility within integrated weed management systems.

The full report from the ENDURE glyphosate survey is available [here](#).

>>> CEG TOBACCO



2025-03-20



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Chair: Martina Cappelletti (IT)

co-Chair: Esther Verdejo (ES)

PFAS in Plant Protection Products: Regulatory Status and Future Outlook

The Commodity Expert Group on Tobacco welcomed a presentation by Ms Panagopoulou (GR) on current and upcoming EU regulatory developments concerning per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), a group of synthetic chemicals used in a wide range of products. [PFAS](#) are characterised by their persistence in the environment, raising significant concerns over long-term contamination and bioaccumulation.



Products that contain PFAS, Copyright: © ECHA. All Rights Reserved.

In response to these concerns, the European Commission has proposed a comprehensive restriction of the PFAS class under the 2024 update to the REACH Regulation.

Notably, active substances used in plant protection products (PPPs) are not included in this proposal. This exemption is based on the strict approval and monitoring procedures already required under Regulation (EU) No 1107/2009 and related PPP-specific frameworks.

As of early 2025, approximately 30 PFAS-based active substances remain approved for use in the EU, with 24 currently undergoing renewal. Seventeen PFAS substances have already been withdrawn from the market, with Flufenacet being the most recent example.

In the context of tobacco production, the group also discussed the ongoing shortage of authorised fungicides for seedbed treatment(s) and effective control of *Phytophthora* species.

Addressing these gaps remains a key priority and will be revisited during the upcoming Autumn meeting.



2025-03-26



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Chair: Magda Rak-Cizej (SI)
co-Chair: Simon Euringer (DE)



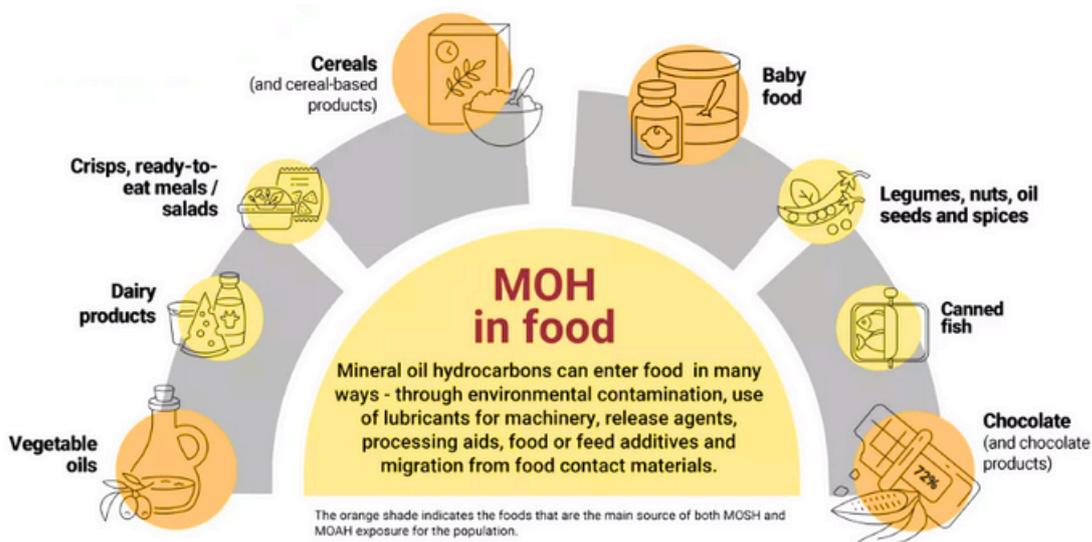
Biological Control in Hops and Regulatory Developments on Mineral Oil Hydrocarbons

The group examined emerging options for biological control of key hop pests. These included:

- Macroorganisms, such as predatory insects;
- Entomopathogenic nematodes, particularly for targeting the hop flea beetle;
- Fungal biocontrol agents, such as *Beauveria bassiana*, *Metarhizium brunneum*, and *Metarhizium anisopliae*;
- Botanical extracts, including oak bark and pinecone sap derivatives.

A separate session was dedicated to food safety concerns related to mineral oil hydrocarbons (MOH), specifically Mineral Oil Saturated Hydrocarbons (MOSH) and Mineral Oil Aromatic Hydrocarbons (MOAH). These contaminants, originating primarily from crude oil, can enter the food chain via:

- Packaging, particularly recycled cardboard containing printing inks;
- Production processes, including hydraulic fluids, lubricants, and separating agents;
- Environmental exposure, such as exhaust emissions and atmospheric deposition during harvest.



In September 2023, EFSA released a scientific opinion paper on MOH in food. It concluded that current dietary exposure to MOSH does not pose a health concern. However, the available toxicological data on MOAH are considered insufficient for a conclusive risk assessment.

As a result, the European Commission has proposed setting maximum residue limits (MRLs) for MOH, with entry into force foreseen on January 1st, 2026, in:

- Raw agricultural commodities;
- Processed foods such as dairy products and cocoa powder;
- Foods containing ingredients for which MRLs are established (accompanied by example calculations in the DG SANTE [FAQ document](#)).

Notably, no MRLs are currently proposed for tea and coffee, nor for cereals used in beer production, as contamination is not expected to carry through to the final brewed product.

The proposal, outlined in the draft document SANTE PLAN 2023/2345, is intended to amend Regulation (EU) 2023/915. The proposed MRLs are available for consultation and can be accessed [here](#).

Topic for further discussion: the proposed maximum residue levels are difficult to achieve for a considerable number of products, particularly herbs, spices and tea, as natural ingredients interfere with MOAH analysis.

➤➤➤ CEG HERBS AND SPICES



2025-03-28



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Chair: Claire Donkin (GB)

co-Chair: Hans van der Mheen (NL)

Advancing Plant Protection in Herbs and Spices: Field Trials, Innovation Initiatives, and Regulatory Considerations

The Commodity Expert Group on Herbs and Spices reviewed the 2025 trial programme coordinated by [ITEIPMAI](#) (Institut Technique de l'Horticulture, website in French) and the French Ministry of Agriculture.

The planned activities include:

- Selectivity trials on *Satureja hortensis* (summer savory), parsley, *Ballota*, coriander, mint, oregano, etc.
- Efficacy trials evaluating a biocontrol product for management of downy mildew in basil;
- Chemical control trials targeting *Septoria* spp. in parsley, using conventional plant protection products.

At a broader level, the French Ministry of Agriculture has launched a [national initiative](#) to support technical institutes in identifying viable alternatives to active substances facing non-renewal or regulatory withdrawal. As part of this strategy, ITEIPMAI will coordinate the five-year '[ADHEMAR](#)' project, beginning in 2025, which aims to develop sustainable weed control solutions for medicinal and aromatic plant systems.

In parallel, the [COST project](#) on non-chemical weed management in medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) was highlighted. This four-year research network, beginning on 27 September 2024, brings together researchers and stakeholders across Europe. The initiative addresses the specific challenges facing MAP cultivation, including:

- Stringent pharmacopeial standards for raw herbal materials, particularly concerning limits on organic impurities, pesticide residues, and other contaminants;
- Lack of approved weed management actives compatible with the EU Green Deal, which targets a 50% reduction in chemical pesticide use by 2030.



The group also examined the potential application of sulphur vapour as a non-synthetic control method for fungal diseases.

While elemental sulphur vapour is recognised for its fungicidal activity via leaf contact, conventional sulphur burners—used for volatilising the compound—can generate sulphur dioxide (SO₂), a by-product not authorised for use in the EU.

However, emerging technologies such as low-temperature, thermostatically controlled evaporators offer a promising alternative by enabling elemental sulphur vaporisation below 180°C, thus avoiding combustion and SO₂ formation.



*Sulphur evaporator,
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2025-03-27



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Chair: Laurent Jacob (FR)

co-Chair: Niels Enggaard Klausen (NL)

Biocontrol and Innovation in Ornamentals: Substrate Biotisation and Pest Control

The Commodity Expert Group on Ornamentals welcomed a presentation by Ms **Melanie Bressan** of the [UniLasalle Institute](#), focusing on substrate biotisation (inoculation of substrate with useful organisms) using biocontrol agents (BCAs) to promote plant health in ornamental production systems. Field trials were conducted on *Choisya ternata*, a widely cultivated ornamental species known for its susceptibility to soilborne pathogens. The study aimed to evaluate the efficacy and persistence of selected BCAs—including *Trichoderma atroviride* and *Pythium oligandrum*—under different cultivation conditions.

Results indicated that irrigation type (drip vs. submersion) had no significant impact on the establishment of BCAs. However, substrate type played a critical role: *P. oligandrum* performed better in low-drainage substrates, whereas *T. atroviride* thrived in high-drainage media. These findings offer practical guidance for integrating BCAs into nursery systems for disease prevention.

The group also reviewed multiple trials presented by the Belgian research centre [Viaverda](#) (website in Flemish), focusing on the biological control of vine weevil (*Otiorhynchus sulcatus*) and thrips, two important taxa in ornamental crops.

Additionally, the potential of plant elicitors—compounds that trigger endogenous plant defence mechanisms—was explored as a complementary approach to improve crop resilience against pests.



Otiorhynchus sulcatus, Copyright: © Pixabay. All Rights Reserved.



2025-04-10



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Chair: Gea Bouwman (NL)

co-Chair: Amalia Kafka (BE)

The Commodity Expert Group on Seeds welcomed representatives from [Novonesis](#), and [Koppert](#), who presented their latest developments in seed protection technologies.

Both companies emphasised the growing role of microbial-based solutions in promoting plant health and productivity, particularly through integrated approaches that combine biostimulants, inoculants, and biocontrol agents.

Novonesis introduced its portfolio, structured around (1) yield enhancement through biostimulants and inoculants, and (2) biological crop protection targeting seed- and soil-borne pathogens. The microbial solutions showcased operate via multiple mechanisms:

- Antagonism against pathogens.
- Induction of systemic plant defences.
- Enhancement of nutrient uptake and root architecture.

Key active agents presented included:

- Lipo-chitooligosaccharides, which enhance mycorrhization and promote root system development.
- *Bacillus amyloliquefaciens* strain FZB24, authorised across numerous crops and effective against powdery mildew, *Monilinia* spp., and *Sclerotinia* spp.
- *Streptomyces lydicus*, known for its broad-spectrum fungicidal activity against *Fusarium*, *Pythium*, and *Phytophthora* species, mediated by the production of bioactive secondary metabolites.

Koppert highlighted its portfolio of seed treatments focused on biological disease control. The company's solutions are centred around:

- *Pseudomonas chlororaphis* MA342, a gram-negative bacterium used to manage a broad spectrum of seedborne diseases in vegetables, such as *Fusarium* spp. (Fusarium wilt) and *Botrytis* spp. (grey mould).
- *Trichoderma harzianum* T-22, a well-established fungal biocontrol agent effective against soil-borne diseases such as *Rhizoctonia*, *Fusarium*, *Pythium*, and *Sclerotinia*.

The discussion underscored the increasing significance of microbial technologies in sustainable seed protection and seed production.



2025-04-08



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Chair: Rauno Aljas (EE)

co-Chair: Barbara Edler (MUCF)

Streamlining Procedures and Enhancing Access to Biocontrol Products

The Horizontal Expert Group continued its work on two key initiatives aimed at improving regulatory efficiency and support for minor uses.

Firstly, experts continued discussions on the development of an abridged dRR Part A template, designed to streamline the application process for extensions of authorisation under Article 51. This aims to reduce administrative burden while maintaining scientific rigour in regulatory submissions.

Secondly, the group continued to explore the potential for a harmonised definition of minor crops at the EU level. A unified classification could improve consistency in regulatory assessments and facilitate data extrapolation across crops and regions.

Ms **Lotte Huisman** and Ms **Anne Steenbergh** from [Ctgb](#) (The Netherlands) presented measures to accelerate the availability of biological PPPs. Central to the discussion was the need for a fit-for-purpose regulatory framework that reflects the distinct characteristics of biological active substances.

The key requirements identified were:

- Greater flexibility in assessment methodologies;
- Substance-specific risk evaluation strategies;
- Improved harmonisation across Member States;
- Enhanced transparency to support regulatory decision-making and stakeholder communication.

The discussions underscored the limitations of the current case-by-case approach, largely a consequence of the absence of a formal EU definition for biocontrol.

Establishing such a definition would provide legal clarity, support risk-based regulatory adaptation, and accelerate market access for safe and sustainable crop protection solutions.



2025-04-08



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Co-Chair: Tiia Mäkinen-Töykkä (FI)

New co-Chair: Mr Chris Anagnostopoulos (GR)

The Residues Expert Group reviewed recent regulatory developments concerning Acetamiprid, a widely used insecticide. In 2024, EFSA released [a statement on the toxicological properties and MRLs of Acetamiprid](#) and proposed revised MRLs for this active substance. Following this, the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (SCoPAFF) adopted a regulation in September 2024 that lowers MRLs for 32 commodities and sets MRLs at the Limit of Quantification (LoQ, 0.01 mg/kg) for an additional six commodities. The new limits will enter into force on 19 August 2025.

The group also revisited a previously discussed proposal for residue extrapolation from oilseed rape to caraway. This proposal had relied on available data for metabolism, storage stability, and analytical methods on an oily matrix, previously compatible with caraway seeds. However, the [draft OECD Test Guideline 506 for Stability of Pesticide Residues in Stored Commodities](#)—currently under revision—proposes reclassifying seed and fruit spices (including caraway) under the dry matrix group. If adopted, this reclassification would invalidate the rationale for extrapolation from rapeseed.

As an alternative, experts considered extrapolation from cereal grains, which are also classified as a dry matrix. However, the applicability is limited by significant differences in pest pressure, notably the presence of *Depressaria daucella* (carrot moth) in caraway, which is absent in cereals. Given these biological distinctions, the feasibility of extrapolation remains uncertain, and the topic will be revisited in the Autumn 2025 meeting.


NEW

Updated French Catalogue of Uses: Framework and Developments

A new version of the French [Catalogue of Uses](#) was released in April 2025. Published as a service note in the official Bulletin of the French Ministry of Agriculture, the catalogue defines the scope of authorised PPPs uses in France.

Within the catalogue, uses are defined by groups of crops x target pests. A crop of reference is defined and covers a scope of crops and commodities covered by the same MRLs and supported by the reference crop. Uses are then identified via an 8-digit code, that may cover a list of several pest species.

➤➤➤ KEY EVENTS AND INITIATIVES ATTENDED BY THE MUCF IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2025

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CTOP Meeting | Paris, 3–4 February 2025

The MUCF was invited to participate in the 2025 session of the French Technical Committee on Orphan Uses (CTOP), a platform that brings together French experts engaged in addressing gaps in plant protection—particularly for ‘orphan uses’ where no authorised solutions currently exist. Key topics discussed included:

- An update on the Strategic Plan for the Anticipation of the Potential European Withdrawal of Active Substances and the Development of Alternatives for Crop Protection ([PARSADA](#), website in French).
- An overview of dossier evaluations in France in 2024: 20 applications for Article 51 extensions were submitted, covering 18 different active substances. Collectively, these dossiers accounted for 199 claimed uses. Notably, while chemical PPPs represented two-thirds of the dossiers, they accounted for only one-third of the total uses.
- A presentation by the [Institut Technique Tropical \(IT²\)](#), which oversees research and development projects in France’s overseas territories. These include work on pests on tropical crops (e.g. *Mycosphaerella* spp. and weevil control in bananas) and the use of service animals such as goats.
- An overview of the French [guidance document](#) detailing the required elements for submission of a plant protection dossier (available in French).



Research and Innovation Webinar on Pesticides and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) | online, 11-12 February 2025

Organised by the European Commission, this webinar convened over 280 participants, including 49 expert speakers, to present and discuss recent advances in plant protection products and IPM. A total of 39 research projects were showcased, highlighting innovations in pesticide development, application technologies, and IPM strategies.

The event also featured a dedicated session on the evolving EU regulatory landscape for pesticides and their sustainable use. The full report and access to all presented materials are available [here](#).

The 2025 Plant Protection and Plant Health International (PPPHI) Symposium convened experts from academia, industry, and regulatory bodies to explore cutting-edge research in biocontrol and address pressing challenges in crop protection. Discussions centred on advancing sustainable agricultural practices, improving the efficacy of biocontrol products, and adapting regulatory frameworks to foster innovation.

Key highlights included:

- The EU's continued strategic emphasis on biocontrol, aligned with the objectives of the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#). The number of approved biological PPPs has steadily increased since 2009, while non-renewal of synthetic pesticides continues to rise.
- Persistent complexity in PPP development and registration processes, with costs reaching up to 12 million EUR per product.
- The critical importance of strengthening research across all stages of the development pipeline for biosolutions.
- The ongoing need to harmonise EU procedures and guidance documents to streamline biocontrol products approval.
- Notable progress in the identification and classification of microbial strains under [EU Regulation 2022/1439](#), improving the regulatory clarity for microbial PPPs.

A suite of IPM resources made available by the International Organisation for Biological and Integrated Control, West Palaearctic Regional Section, (IOBC-WPRS), including harmonised IPM guidelines and an [interactive IPM Farmer's Toolbox](#), developed as a pilot initiative for the European Commission.



9th Meeting of the OECD Expert Group on Biopesticides (EGBP) | Paris, 26 February 2025

The MUCF took part in the 9th session of the OECD Expert Group on Biopesticides (EGBP), convened on 26 February 2025. The meeting focused on advancing regulatory frameworks and assessment methodologies for non-chemical plant protection products.

Discussions addressed key developments, including the refinement of definitions and risk assessment protocols for biopesticides, alongside targeted legislative amendments to Regulation (EU) No 1107/2009.

A series of international regulatory updates were also shared:

- Canada has finalised a regulation for biopesticides, with an accompanying guidance document expected by the end of 2025.
- The International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA) is preparing a position paper on the use of semiochemicals in agriculture.
- The FAO released a [guidance document](#) detailing data requirements for biological products.
- The OECD is developing new regulatory documents covering the biocontrol agents *Beauveria bassiana* and *Bacillus amyloliquefaciens*.

Participants were also briefed on advances in microbial pesticide evaluation, including evolving best practices and the risk assessment framework.

A highlight of the meeting was the [RATION](#) project—an EU initiative aiming to develop a harmonised, streamlined approach for evaluating low-risk pesticides. These initiatives represent significant progress toward a more agile, science-based regulatory environment that supports innovation while safeguarding environmental and human health.



Eastern Europe Regulatory Conference | Zagreb, 8–9 April 2025

In April, over 100 stakeholders from across Europe gathered in Zagreb for the Eastern Europe Regulatory Conference to discuss the latest developments in PPP regulation. The event covered a wide spectrum of topics central to sustainable agriculture, regulatory innovation, and regulatory harmonisation across Member States.

Some highlights of the conference are presented hereafter:



Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as the New Norm:

Participants noted that IPM has become the baseline approach in EU farming systems. The next frontier involves refining IPM practices to reflect local agro-ecological conditions. Key strategies include cultivar selection, regionally calibrated decision-support systems, development of application techniques and improved understanding of pest-crop environment interactions.

Digital Labelling and Record-Keeping:

The European Commission plans to implement [new PPP labelling rules](#) by January 2027, replacing Regulation (EU) 547/2011. The update will mandate digital access to product information via QR codes or web links and introduce a colour-coded labelling scheme:

- **Dark green** for low-risk substances
- **Light green** for microorganisms
- **Yellow** for conventional products
- **Orange** for candidates for substitution

Mandatory warnings for bee protection and microorganism sensitisation will also be introduced. The implementation of digital label allows for instant access to approved recommendations and safety information about a product. The CLP Regulation (EU) 2024/2865 will further strengthen requirements for label preparation. These changes aim to increase transparency, reduce relabelling costs, and support informed PPP use.

The [AgriGuide](#) initiative exemplifies this digital transition, offering a platform to simplify PPP handling and application, with over 300 product labels already available. Concurrently, from 1 January 2026, electronic record-keeping will become mandatory for professional users under Article 67 of Regulation (EU) 1107/2009. Record keeping was already mandatory before this date but can be done in a written form by farmers.

Streamlining Low-Risk Product Assessments:

The International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA) presented decision trees for evaluating the risks of microbial and natural-substance PPPs. These tools aim to improve consistency and efficiency in the approval process for low-risk products.

- [Data Decision Tree for identifying potential risks for microorganisms when used in plant protection](#)
- [Data decision tree for identifying potential risks for natural substances when used in plant protection](#)

Toward a Unified Definition of Biocontrol:

The European Commission is developing a definition of 'biocontrol'. This initiative is expected to harmonise authorisation processes, stimulate innovation, align regulatory frameworks with the EU's sustainability and food security goals and levelling the playing field across the EU member states. The absence of a common definition remains a barrier, given the multiple legislative frameworks that intersect with Regulation (EU) 1107/2009.

The biocontrol market has seen rapid growth, exceeding USD 9 billion globally in 2024. It is projected to surpass USD 12 billion by 2030. Latin America remains a key growth driver, with European innovation largely led by SMEs.

PPP Authorisation 2030 – Designing the Future Framework:

Launched in Germany in 2022, the 'PPP Authorisation 2030' project brought together around 100 participants from across the regulatory landscape. Seven working groups addressed critical issues, including:

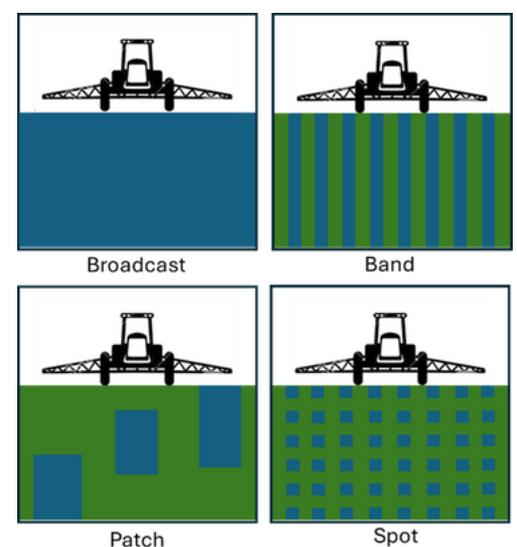
- National regulatory process of authorisation.
- Loss of active substances – problems for crop protection, with focus subgroups on IPM and organic farming.
- Implementation of new application techniques.
- Risk Management – tailor-made Risk Mitigation Measures (RMM).
- Post-Authorisation – Advise to PPP-Users and Control.
- Post-Authorisation – Monitoring and Data Management.

The project's final report is now publicly available [here](#).

Precision Application in Focus:

The European Precision Application Task Force ([EUPAE](#)), established in 2023, presented updates on its efforts to integrate digital tools and emerging technologies into PPP application practices. Key areas include:

- Cataloguing available precision application techniques
- Developing recommendations for GAP tables and handbooks
- Evaluating risk and risk mitigation strategies
- Studying drone-based applications
- Addressing unique challenges in 3D crops such as orchards and vineyards



Established in 2005, the Northern Zone Steering Committee (comprised of representatives from Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia) continues to promote coordinated PPP authorisation across Northern Europe. Its '[Northern Zone Guidance Document for authorisation of PPPs](#)'—regularly updated and due for revision in early Summer 2025—lays out common procedures for authorisation, renewal, and amendment of products following EU active substance approvals.

All presentations and a detailed summary of the conference are available to MUCF permanent members on the [MUCF extranet](#).

➤➤➤ UPCOMING EVENTS



14th Conference of the European Foundation for Plant Pathology

The EFPP promotes scientific and technical cooperation in the arena of plant health in Europe and facilitates the exchange of scientific information between plant pathologists who are members of national or regional Societies in the field of plant pathology or related fields.

- Date: **June 2–5, 2025**
- Location: Uppsala, Sweden

For more details and registration links, visit <https://www.efpp2025.com/>

International Hop Growers' Convention (IHGC)

The IHGC provides a global platform for hop growers' associations and industry stakeholders to address shared challenges and align on strategies for production and trade.

- Date: **June 29 – July 3, 2025**
- Location: Spalt, Germany

Further details and registration: <https://www.ihgc.org/>

21st International Reinhardsbrunn Symposium on Modern Fungicides and Antifungal Compounds

This symposium is a key venue for cutting-edge research in fungicide science. The 2026 edition will focus on:

- Fungicide resistance monitoring and diagnostics;
- Emerging fungicide technologies and applications;
- Bio-rational fungicides and biocontrol;
- Molecular crop protection and regulatory innovations.
- Date: **April 16–23, 2026**
- Location: Friedrichroda, Germany
- Further details and registration:

<https://reinhardsbrunn-symposium.de/de/>



Using problem formulation for an efficient, fit-for-purpose risk assessment of microbial plant protection products

Anne K. Steenbergh, Gertie Arts, Peter A.H.M. Bakker, Wietse de Boer, Debora C.M. Glandorf, Mechteld M.S. ter Horst, Rob de Jonge, Willem Jan de Kogel & Jürgen Köhl

Environmental Sciences Europe, 37, Article 24 (2025)

This article outlines a structured approach to the risk assessment of microbial PPPs, proposing the use of problem formulation based on Pathways leading to crop damage. The authors advocate for a harmonised, case-by-case assessment method that is aligned with current EU regulatory frameworks. The approach is illustrated with practical examples, and key additional elements required to optimise microbial PPP risk assessments are discussed.

[Read the full article here](#)

European Commission Communication: A vision for Agriculture and Food

This strategic document is a Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions. It outlines a vision for shaping a sustainable, resilient, and attractive farming and agri-food sector for future generations in the EU.

[Read the full communication here.](#)

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