

## &gt;&gt;&gt; NEWSLETTER &lt;&lt;&lt;

# EUROPEAN MINOR USES COORDINATION FACILITY

Minor uses, major importance.



## TOP NEWS



### WINTER EDITION

By the MUCF team

## &gt;&gt;&gt; DEAR MUCF COMMUNITY

Welcome to the twenty third edition of the MUCF newsletter. In this issue we present recent progress on key initiatives and offer an initial outline of plans for 2026 to strengthen work on minor uses.

As 2025 comes to a close, we look back on an intensive, but also productive year. It has also been notable for a significant milestone. One of our experts, Mr Laurent Jacob, reminded us that the MUCF held its first meeting in Munich, Germany in 2015.

A decade later, we returned to Munich to mark our tenth anniversary and hold the MUCF Autumn 2025 Meetings. Highlights and outcomes from these are described in the following pages. This anniversary also prompted reflection on the development of the MUCF. At its launch in 2015, the initiative was supported by three member countries, Germany, France, and the Netherlands, together with a grant from the European Union. Today, more than nineteen European countries contribute to MUCF activities and over three hundred experts collaborate on issues related to minor uses and speciality crops across Europe.

We hope you find this edition informative. Your feedback, suggestions and continued interest are highly valued and play a key role in shaping our future work.

We look forward to sharing updates and to continued collaboration in the year ahead.



# SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AUTUMN 2025 MEETINGS



From the 28th to the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2025, the MUCF Expert Group meetings were held in Munich and brought together more than eighty specialists on minor uses from across Europe. Key points from each group follows, together with an overview of participation and updates on current Chair(s) and co-Chair(s). These expert groups remain central to addressing minor use challenges, strengthening collaboration, and advancing crop protection solutions for minor uses within Europe.

Bavarian State Ministry  
of Food, Agriculture and Forestry



Bayerischer  
Bauernverband

We express our sincere thanks to the Bavarian Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry and to the Bavarian Farmers Association for hosting the meetings during these three intensive days. We also wish to acknowledge the support of Mr Thomas Pfeiffer, core member of the Herbs and Spices Commodity Expert Group (CEG), whose assistance was instrumental in the organisation of the event.

## RESIDUE EXPERT GROUP (REEG)



2025-10-28



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co-Chair: Ms **Tiia Mäkinen-Töykkä** (FI).

New co-Chair: **Mr Chris Anagnostopoulos** (EL).

The co-Chair, Ms Tiia Mäkinen-Töykkä from the Safety and Chemicals Agency ([Tukes](#)), informed experts about recent developments in residue extrapolation. The updated [EU Guidance on extrapolations](#) was adopted by SCoPAFF Phytopharmaceuticals Pesticide Residues group on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025.



### Key changes include:

- Cucurbits with inedible peel: Extrapolation is now permitted from *Cucurbita maxima* to the entire group of cucurbits with inedible peel. Previously, extrapolation was only allowed from melon (*Cucumis melo*).
- Oilseeds: Extrapolation is now permitted from rapeseed and other major oilseed crops to caraway (*Carum carvi*). Although considered a minor crop in Finland, caraway is grown on about 20 000 hectares. The proposal was supported by the MUCF expert working group through a joint support document prepared by experts from Finland and Germany and presented at the SCoPAFF Pesticide Residues meeting in November 2024. This work aimed to improve access to plant protection products for caraway cultivation. Congratulations go to the experts for this achievement and for their effective collaboration.



*Caraway flower  
(family Apiaceae),  
blooming in Finland.*

*Photo source:  
M. Rönqvist.*

### The following extrapolations are now permitted in both directions:

- Herbs and edible flowers <-> Herbal infusions from leaves and herbs.
- Herbal infusions from flowers; herbal infusions from leaves and herbs <-> Bud spices, flower pistil spices, and aril spices.

The [OECD Test Guideline 506](#), dedicated to Stability of Pesticides Residues in Stored Commodities, was updated on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Seed and fruit spices are now grouped under the 'dry matrix' category.

The draft Revised [OECD Guidance Document on Pesticide Residue Analytical Methods](#) was open to public consultation from September 12<sup>th</sup> to October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025. The definitive version is not yet available.

Ms Garcés (Corteva Agriscience) and Mr Fargeix (Bayer CropScience) highlighted the industry perspectives on minor uses, pointing out the need for:

- Harmonisation in the criteria to define a minor crop.
- Keeping national lists of minor crops and uses updated.
- Using the mutual recognition procedure as much as possible.

Future work outlook ReEG: Experts proposed initiating work on a possible extrapolation extension from rapeseed and other major oilseed crops to coriander seed crops.

At the Spring 2026 meeting, updates will be provided on work conducted in Spain on the potential extrapolation from citrus to mango.



2025-10-28



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Chair: **Mr Rauno Aljas** (EE)

co-Chair: Barbara Edler (MUCF)

**Abridged dRR Part A template:**

Experts received an update by the MUCF consultant Ms Chara Panagopoulou (GR) on recent amendments made to the abridged dRR Part A template, which is designated to streamline applications submitted under Article 51 of Regulation 1107/2009 for extensions of authorisation for minor uses. Some sections still require further refinement. The revised draft, together with the proposed next steps to make the document publicly available for its intended use, will be presented to experts at the Spring 2026 meeting.

**Harmonised European minor crop definition:**

A revised concept for a harmonised definition of minor crops, first developed by MUCF consultant Christina Donat (AT), was presented for discussion.

The proposal outlines a methodological shift from national-level registration of low-risk plant protection products with no established MRLs at first. However, the concept also could be extended to not low risk plant protection products (products are classified in low risk without established MRLs, low risk products with established MRLs, not low risk products) to a single dossier evaluation at EU level, treating the Union as one regulatory zone. The aim is to reduce administrative workload for applicants and authorities while improving access to plant protection product solutions for crops with limited cultivation area. The proposed concept also seeks to reduce reliance on emergency authorisations. Under the approach, selected groups of plant protection products, notably low-risk substances with no established MRLs, could receive immediate market access for an agreed set of crops without compromising safety standards.

EUROSTAT data on crop production (standard humidity dataset apro\_cpsh1) were used as the primary reference to classify crops grown within the EU. Although this dataset has known limitations, including incomplete reporting of crops cultivated on low acreage and the grouping of certain commodities into crop clusters, it remains the most comprehensive source covering all 27 Member States (MS).

In the proposal, crops are assigned to three groups (avoiding commonly used terminology such as micro, minor, or major crops) according to the proportion of the total EU arable land on which they are grown: Group 1 (grown in total <0.018 percent), Group 2 (grown in total between 0.018–0.13 percent), and Group 3 (grown in total >0.13 percent).



Applicants would submit a single dossier to **one** competent authority for the relevant crop and/or use to the MS with the largest cultivated area for the crop of interest. Following evaluation, the authorisation would apply across the entire EU. An alternative option would be for example that an EU body such as EFSA performs the evaluation on behalf of the Union. Initial implementation is envisioned for low-risk active substances without established MRLs, given inherently lower regulatory concern.

Experts from SE and BE presented analyses of the potential national impact of adopting the harmonised definition. Their work assessed how many crops would change status from minor to major, or vice versa, under the new criteria. Any change in status may have national consequences depending on legislation, such as altered application fees or changes to the applicability of the risk envelope approach. Proposed thresholds still can be discussed and therewith adjusted. They are not set in stone but are a first step for starting a discussion. These aspects, together with broader advantages and disadvantages of a harmonised minor crop definition, were examined in a dedicated breakout session. A summary is provided in *Table 1*.

*Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of a harmonised European minor crop definition.*

### Advantages

- More products available for minor uses.
- Reduces time and cost for applicants and lowers evaluation workload for authorities.
- Treats the EU as a single regulatory zone, reducing zonal or national inconsistencies.
- Easier for companies to add new crops to product labels and gain immediate access to the EU market, avoiding separate national authorisations.
- Incentivises registration for very small acreage crops (<0.018 percent) by enabling EU-wide authorisation in one step when the active is already approved.
- Improves harmonisation through agreed criteria, reduces regulatory hurdles, and supports equal access to plant protection tools for farmers across Member States. A level playing field for all farmers in the EU could be achieved.

### Disadvantages

- With a European harmonized defined criteria of a “minor crop” a national crop status could change with a minor crop becomes major (issue 1), or a major crop becomes minor (issue 2).
- While unlikely for crops in Group 1 (<0.018 percent) and Group 2 (0.018–0.13 percent), to change their status from minor to major. If such changes may transfer, the competent authority of the concerned country could perform the dossier evaluation.
- An active substance must still be registered (e.g., under Art. 33) on a major crop at least in one EU MS, before an extension (e.g., under Art. 51) can be granted.
- Risk that products with limited efficacy may be authorised. This could be mitigated through label disclaimers (“*which is already the practice*”).
- Possible loss of national flexibility of handling minor uses.
- Introduction of another system that may not function as intended.
- National procedures can still block the new concept, but this is finally depending on the commitment of the national competent authority.
- It is difficult to implement an EU-wide one-zone approach under the current legal framework (Reg. 1107/2009). *However, because a single-zone approach already exists for post-harvest, greenhouse, and indoor uses, and is being considered for possible application to “biologicals”, its broader implementation should be feasible.*



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co-Chair: Ms **Alice McGlynn** (IE); Fuits session

co-Chair: Ms **Theodora Nikolopoulou** (EL); Vegetables session

co-Chair: Mr **Peter Hartvig** (DK); Weeds session

The group reviewed the ongoing renewal of **Flonicamid**, an insecticide central to the control of aphids, thrips, and whiteflies in vegetable production. Germany highlighted the need to generate additional residue data for lettuce and other salad crops, and the subject remain on to the agenda for the Spring 2026 meeting.

Following the discussion initiated in Spring 2025 (see [MUCF Newsletter n°22](#)), Ms Jeannette Vriend (NL) presented the results of a survey conducted among the experts to study the available solutions to **control caterpillars in greenhouses on lettuce and tomato crops**. Control remains heavily dependent on *Bacillus thuringiensis*, as the number of authorised active substances continues to decline. Five active substances used in tomatoes have been withdrawn in the past five years. Industry representatives will be invited to a future meeting to discuss potential solutions and development pipelines.

Building on work conducted in Autumn 2024 regarding the available plant protection product alternatives to **Spirotetramat** (see [MUCF Newsletter n°21](#)), Ms Alice McGlynn (IE) presented the results of a questionnaire circulated among European countries to document the authorised GAPs for use of these alternative products. The aim of this exercise is to support the mutual recognition procedure by improving visibility of authorised uses of the identified alternatives across Europe.

Ms Theodora Nikolopoulou (GR) presented a joint EFSA project led by Greece, Denmark, and Spain to strengthen the **evaluation of emergency authorisations under Article 53**, while ensuring alignment with the Farm to Fork strategy. A draft protocol for insecticides and acaricides has already been discussed with Member States during a workshop in Athens, and public consultation closed on 10 October 2025. Protocols for fungicides, bactericides and herbicides will follow, along with stakeholder training on the use of these protocols.

During the session dedicated to fruit protection, the experts welcomed several presentations:

- Ms Silvia Sabbadini, from [the Università Politecnica delle Marche](#) (IT), presented ongoing research on **RNA interference** (RNAi) as a plant protection strategy. The RNAi technique allows inhibition of the expression of targeted genes, thanks to short double-stranded RNA molecules. Potential agricultural applications could include extension of shelf life for fruits and vegetables, insect/virus resistance and lengthened flowering of ornamentals.



- Mr Dani Casado from [Suterra](#) presented the company's available solutions dedicated to **pheromone mating** disruption. Mating disruption modifies the insect males' behaviour, troubling their ability to pinpoint location of female insects, thus inhibiting mating. This type of insect control benefits from a high specificity, a low toxicological profile, and an absence of residues.

**WITHOUT MATING DISRUPTION**

**What is Mating Disruption?**

**Mating disruption modifies male behavior**

Males use sex pheromone trails to locate females for mating

MD products disperse synthetic copies of the pheromone into the air

Males have problems to pinpoint locations of females, inhibiting mating

**The mode of actions is non-toxic**

**Only males are affected**

**LESS MATING**

**LOWER POPULATION**

**WITH MATING DISRUPTION**

**Mode of action of pheromone mating disruptors.**

**Picture source:**  
© Suterra

- Mr Tom Groot from [Koppert](#) presented the company's available solutions to control *Nezara viridula*, *Popillia japonica* and spider mites.

The weed control session opened with an overview by Mr Peter Hartvig (DK) on new Danish regulations concerning **PFAS (Per and polyfluoroalkyl substances) and their smallest break down as trifluoroacetic acid (TFA)** and their implications for pesticide use. More than 4 700 substances meet the PFAS definition according to the OECD. These substances are not only present in plant protection products but are also used widely used in industrial and consumer products (e.g. non-stick coatings such as Teflon, food packaging). Their withdrawal is expected to affect crop protection options for potatoes and onions (e.g. Fluazinam), and for cereals (e.g. Diflufenican, Fluopyram and Mefentrifluconazole). The forthcoming withdrawal of Flonicamid and Tau-fluvalinate will significantly reduce insect control options for many crops.

### Status of Danish approvals of pesticides that contain PFAS or may form TFA during degradation in soil

	"Evidence" of PFAS or TFA	Approval status in Denmark
Flufenacet	OECD definition, EFSA report	Has never been approved in DK
Fluazifob-P-butyl	OECD definition, TFA found in Danish Study	No longer approved in DK
Trifluralin	OECD definition, TFA found in Danish Study	No longer approved in DK
Taufluvalinat	OECD definition, TFA found in Danish Study	Withdrawn, approved until December 2025
Diflufenican	OECD definition, TFA found in Danish Study	Withdrawn, approved until December 2026
Fluopyram	OECD definition, TFA found in Danish Study	Withdrawn, approved until September 2026
Fluazinam	OECD definition, TFA found in Danish Study	Withdrawn, approved until September 2026
Mefentrifluconazole	OECD definition, TFA found in Danish Study	Withdrawn, approved until July 2026
Flonicamid	OECD definition	Withdrawn, approved until August 2026
Lambda-cyhalothrin	OECD definition	No decision yet.
Oxathiapiprolin	OECD definition	
Picolinafen	OECD definition	
Pyroxsulam	OECD definition	
Tefluthrin	OECD definition	

*Status of PFAS approval in Denmark.*

*Source: P. Hartvig and modified by MUCF.*

Mr Frieder Lutz (DE) reported on the state of weed management options in German carrot production. In 2024, carrots were grown on 13 789 hectares, producing 851 000 tonnes, making Germany the largest European producer.

Whereas the available crop protection solution still mostly rely on conventional plant protection products (e.g., Ethofumesat can be used until 31/10/2031, Fluroxypyr until 15/02/2027, Metamitron until 30/11/2026 and Pyridate until 31/12/2030), the implementation of new technologies such as 'spot spraying', 'farmdroids' and 'laser weeders' (one example is given below) still face several obstacles (primarily high investment cost), making them almost only used by major carrot producers.

## Laser Weeder from Switzerland



Laser weeding can be an alternative to replace or supplement herbicides and other weed control methods in an Integrated Weed Management (IPM) strategy.

## How does the technology work?

### Weed detection



A deep-learning model classifies each image into crop plants, weeds, and soil. Detected crop plants (in orange) are assigned an additional protection zone (in blue) to prevent accidental exposure of their leaves to the laser. The system can recognise all major row crops, although reliable discrimination between crop and weed species requires a sufficiently large training dataset that captures multiple growth stages and a range of environmental conditions.

### Laser Treatment

Laser treatment destroys or suppresses weeds by delivering high-density energy directly to the plant tissue. The beam rapidly heats intracellular water, damaging the cells and halting or slowing growth. Treated plants typically die within hours. The weeds are not pulled out from the soil, so the soil is not disturbed. Moist weeds require slightly higher energy levels to achieve effective control.







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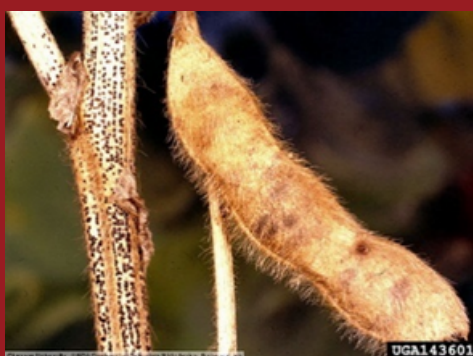
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Chair: **Gea Bouwman** (NL)

co-Chair: **Amalia Kafka** (BE)

Mr Etienne Bouquet (FR), chairman of the [Euroseeds](#) Section Oil & Fibre, presented the working group dedicated to soybean and the issue of *Diaporthe sojae* (synonym *Diaporthe phaseolorum* var. *sojae*) (pod blight) in Europe. This pathogen can cause substantial germination losses, often reaching 30–35 percent, and poses challenges for seed certification. In the European Union, certification is permitted only when infestation remains below 15 percent. As no treatments for soybean are currently authorised, soybean seed protection depends heavily on Article 53 authorisations.

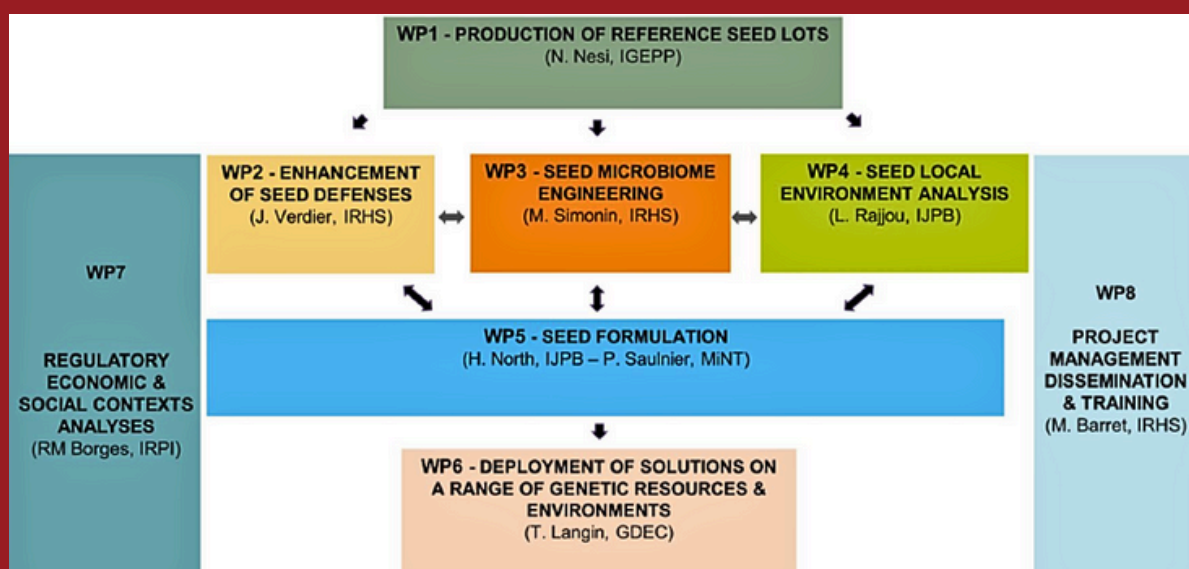


*Symptoms of Diaporthe phaseolorum var. sojae in soya stem and pods.*

Source:  
<https://ephytia.inra.fr/fr/C/22670/Vigi-Semences-Diaporthe-sojae-Diaporthe-caulivora>

Mr Matthieu Barret (INRAE) summarised progress on the [SUCSEED project](#) (website in French). The programme brings together more than 15 academic and associative partners, operates on a five-year budget of 11.3 million EUR, and involves roughly 1350 contributors. It comprises eight working groups focused on improving seed vigour and preventing seed transmission of pathogens without the use of chemical protection inputs. Working Group 2, which concentrates on enhancing seed defences, addresses three fundamental areas:

- Activation of seed defence with plant resistance inducer.
- Plant-microbial molecular interaction during seed transmission.
- Seed defence regulation occurring during seed dormancy.



*Working parties of the SUCSEED project.*

Experts were also updated on the ongoing SCoPAFF assessment of Sodium Hypochlorite as a potential basic substance for seed treatment against viral and fungal seed-borne diseases. A position letter prepared by the MUCF, with support from the Seeds CEG, was circulated to SCoPAFF on March 25, 2025. A final vote is expected during the SCoPAFF Legislation December meeting (2025-12-10/11), and experts will be informed about the outcome accordingly.

Finally, Ms Rae Cook (UK) outlined forthcoming regulatory changes on seed imports. From the 1st of July 2027, only seed treated with plant protection products that hold an existing authorisation in the UK for the same use may be imported, marketed, or used. A proposed UK–EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary agreement aims to ease remaining post-Brexit trade barriers.



*Experts from CEG Seeds joined both in person & online for their dedicated working group session.*





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Chair: **Claire Donkin** (UK)

co-Chair: **Hans van der Mheen** (NL)

Mr Tom Groot ([Koppert](#)) briefed the experts on the company's current biocontrol solutions. *Steinernema carpocapsae* is available for the management of leafhoppers, and *Akanthomyces muscarius* strain Ve6 is used for whitefly control. Research is underway to extend these applications to biocontrol against thrips, aphids, and mealybugs.

Ms Anne Chappelle (FR) informed the participants that France started a Horizon Europe scanning project which will last 5 years to screen for downy mildew and septoria control solutions. The first results are expected during the first half of 2026.

The experts were also briefed on the activities of the Association for the Promotion of Medicinal and Spice Plant Cultivation in Bavaria, Germany.

Established in 1985, the association includes:

- About 100 individual growers and growers' cooperatives.
- Twenty-three companies involved in processing, trade, or analytical laboratory services related to medicinal and spice plant production.
- Several research institutes.



The association's mission is to support the development of medicinal and spice plant cultivation in Bavaria, represent its members in front of authorities, and conduct public outreach through publications, press communication, and conferences.

Structure of medicinal and spice plant cultivation in Bavaria:

- Approximately 2 000 hectares are devoted to medicinal and spice plant production.
- Producers range from small farms to operations of up to 100 hectares.
- More than 50 medicinal and spice plant species are cultivated. The most widely grown are parsley, dill, chives, and peppermint.



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

Mr Florian Weihrauch (DE) presented recent German trials addressing soil-borne pests in hop cultivation.

- Alfalfa snout beetle *Otiorhynchus ligustici*: control via entomopathogenic nematodes such as *Steinernema carpocapsae* have been conducted.
- Monitoring of *Agriotes* spp. via pheromone traps to assess wireworm (larvae of *Agriotes* spp.) populations.
- Rosy rustic moth *Hydraecia micacea*.
- Hop flea beetle *Psylliodes attenuatus*.

Ms Regina Stampfl (DE) and Mr Simon Euringer (DE) updated the group regarding the latest results conducted by [the Bavarian State Research Center for Agriculture](#) on downy mildew, powdery mildew and hop aphids.

Ms Alinne Oliveira (Bryant Christie Inc., US) provided an update on recent changes to international maximum residue limits, including developments in the European Union, Canada, Japan, and South Korea, as well as the most recent Codex revisions.



Experts from CEG Hops.





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Chair: **Laurent Jacob** (FR)

co-Chair: Mr **Niels Enggaard Klausen** (DK)

The Ornamentals CEG exerts reviewed recently withdrawn and newly authorised plant protection products in 2025, along with active substances expected to reach approval by 2030. The group were also given a presentation from Tom Groot ([Koppert](#)) outlining the company's portfolio for ornamental crops. He focused in particular on integrated management of invasive thrips species, including *Thrips parvispinus* and *Scirtothrips dorsalis*, using the predatory mite *Orius laevigatus*, a key natural enemy of these pests.

Mr Giovanni Minuto (IT) reported on studies aimed at supporting the re-registration of selected soil fumigants in 2026. These fumigants, used for soil disinfection, remain essential in intensive flower and vegetable production to maintain a healthy propagative substrate. Compliance with European groundwater protection standards requires application beneath gas-tight plastic mulch, which enables dose reduction, limits leaching, and enhances degradation in the soil.

Mr Hessel van der Heide (NL) summarised findings from 2025 greenhouse trials covering 100 hectares of Gerbera, evaluating pheromone-based control of the Turkish moth *Chrysodeixis chalcites*. Pheromone disruption interferes with insect communication by releasing an excess of sex pheromones, preventing/limiting mating. When deployed correctly, ideally starting in February, moth pressure becomes more manageable, resulting in reduced feeding damage despite ongoing moth activity. However, such pheromone traps require PPP registration. With chemical control options rapidly diminishing, alternative methods are critical to prevent resistance development. Measures such as insect screens on ventilation openings can be effective when combined with pheromone strategies, although they are not always cost-efficient. Future work will extend this trial methodology to certain vegetable crops (e.g., sweet/bell pepper, tomato, cucumber, and aubergine).



*Turkish moth Chrysodeixis chalcites caterpillars feeding on a gerbera flower.*

*Picture source: Hessel van der Heide.*



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Chair: Ms **Martina Cappelletti** (IT)

co-Chair: Ms **Esther Verdejo** (ES).

The experts discussed critical issues such as nematode infestations, sucker control, and a range of phytosanitary concerns adversely affecting both yield and quality of tobacco. Particular attention was given to the high disease pressure in the tobacco crop and the limited availability of plant protection solutions to address these threats.

The tobacco farmer mainly lack access to systemic products to control blue mould *Peronospora hyoscyami* (synonym *Peronospora hyoscyami f.sp. tabacina*), powdery mildew *Erysiphe cichoracearum* and red spider mite *Tetranychus urticae*.

In the case of blue mould, current control relies on agronomic practices that include removing the stubbles of the previous crop, selecting an appropriate seedbed location, reducing plant density, and scheduling an earlier harvest.



*Blue mould symptoms on a tobacco leaf.*

*Picture source: Martina Cappelletti.*



The experts had the opportunity to visit the headquarters and processing facility of the [Salus Group](#) in Bruckmühl. Founded in 1916, the Salus Group specialises in teas, tonics, essential oils, natural cosmetics and more. Mr Peter Riedl presented the company and the different challenges related to quality requirements and pesticide residues. In organic herb cultivation, chemical PPP residues can be found as a result of drift from neighbouring fields, or from persistent residues found in the soil. Although these residues are the results of indirect contamination, they can render the raw products unable to meet the quality requirements enforced by the European legislation.



The experts were also guided through the company's experimental garden and herb storage facilities, where they received detailed information on the methods used to prevent pest infestation. Salus subjects incoming raw material to CO<sub>2</sub> pressure-chamber treatment at approximately 20 bar for eight hours." This approach provides effective pest control prior to storage without the use of plant protection products.

**We thank the Salus Group for hosting the visit and for their generous engagement with the experts.**

## >>> PLenary SESSION

During a 1-hour plenary session, the experts welcomed presentations from representatives of [Corteva Agriscience](#), [Certis Biologicals](#) and [Neudorff](#), to present their position regarding the challenges surrounding the authorisation of minor uses in Europe.



October 22, 2025 (online)



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Chair: **Margarita Pérez** (ES)  
co-Chair: **Réjane Mazier** (FR)  
co-Chair: **Nancy Pick** (BE)

The Mushrooms CEG held their meeting online on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, separately from the Meetings held in Munich.

The discussion focused on several key regulatory and technical issues:

Trials are ongoing to support the temporary Maximum Residue Level (MRL) of Chlormequat and to determine its transfer rate from straw to cultivated mushrooms. Residues may appear through cross-contamination from cereal straw legally treated with Chlormequat chloride, which is commonly used as a cultivation substrate.

The group reviewed the new MRL for 'phosphonic acid and its salts', as set out in EU Reg. 2024/2619 at 1.5 mg/kg. As with Chlormequat, cross-contamination can occur via the growing substrate for mushrooms, and the concern is particularly high in production of organic mushrooms. You can find more information regarding the origins of phosphonic acids in plant-based food and in mushrooms in the following [article](#):

Participants also examined planned reductions in copper MRLs from 20 mg/kg to 4 mg/kg. Although no copper products are authorised for mushroom production, residues may still be introduced through the growing substrate (i.e. straw), and the lower limit may prove challenging in some EU countries.

Finally, the experts discussed the search for alternatives to Metrafenone for controlling fungal diseases and delaying resistance development.

As Metrafenone is currently the only active substance authorised for this use in Europe, temporary approvals under Article 53 are being sought to permit Fluxapyroxad-based products.



*Pleurotus eryngii.*  
Source: Pixabay.



**The Netherlands: New fund launched for minor uses of crop protection products.**

LTO Nederland, CropLife NL, and the Dutch government have established a fund to support the authorisation of crop protection products for minor uses. The first application round for product nomination closed in September 2025, and the fund will operate until 31 December 2028. Several changes distinguish this initiative from earlier schemes.

The fund now prioritises applications for low-risk products and will also support approvals, or extensions of approvals, for basic substances. Products containing active ingredients classified as Candidates for Substitution are excluded. These criteria were defined by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, and Food Quality (LNV) to ensure responsible use of public funds.

**Background of the fund:**

The Fund helps cover the inflated costs of registering crop protection products or obtaining environmental permits for releasing biological control agents. From this year onwards, it also covers procedures and studies required for the approval of basic substances.

The fund is managed by the Stichting Kleine Toepassingen Gewasbeschermingsmiddelen (Foundation for Minor Uses of Crop Protection Products), established specifically for this purpose by CropLife NL and LTO Nederland. Funding costs are shared equally between the Ministry of LNV and the private sector.

The fund's regulations and the application form are available on the CropLife NL website [via this page](#).

**Upscaling minor crops with institutional catering ([CROPCAT project](#))**

Transitioning towards agroecology requires more diversified farming systems, including the reintroduction of minor crops. This remains a major challenge in Europe, where land use is dominated by a small number of staple crops.

Farmers often lack context-specific agronomic knowledge for minor crops, and demand remains low due to limited consumption habits. Institutional catering, with its strong influence on production and consumption patterns, offers a promising lever to stimulate both supply and demand.

Achieving this shift, however, requires coordinated progress across cultivation, storage, pre-processing, cooking, and consumer acceptance.

The CROPCAT project is coordinated by the National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE-AGIR) by Mr Guillaume Martinand FR, DE, DK, PT, ES, IT are involved, aims to expand the cultivation of minor crops in farmers' fields and increase their use in institutional catering through a co-innovation and interdisciplinary framework.

### The CROPCAT project will:

- develop guidelines to run ‘living labs’ in which innovations for minor crops are co-created along the value chain and assess resulting impacts including co-learning.
- (characterise the agroecological performance of minor crops, refine cultivation techniques to close yield gaps, and enhance ecosystem service delivery.
- design low-tech pre-processing methods that prevent metabolic degradation during storage and preserve sanitary and nutritional quality.
- establish a framework for integrating the value of minor-crop food products into new business models centred on institutional catering.
- create behavioural nudges to encourage consumers to choose dishes prepared with minor-crop ingredients.
- identify policy tools and governance mechanisms that support the development of minor crops from field to canteen, including procurement pathways.



Living lab	Country	Production standard	Minor crops
1	Denmark	Organic	Pulses, quinoa
2	Germany	Conventional & organic	Chickpea, lentil, buckwheat
3	Italy	Conventional & organic	Chickpea, lentil, buckwheat, millet
4	France	Organic	Chickpea, millet
5	Spain	Organic	Chickpea, millet, carob
6	Portugal	Organic	Cowpea, broad bean

Overview of the living labs locations (position of the flags) across Europe and main features of these living labs.

Minor crops mentioned are the outcomes of preliminary discussion with the living lab stakeholders while developing the CROPCAT proposal.

Picture source: Guillaume Martin, picture modified by MUCF.

The CROPCAT project, led by [UMR AGIR](#) (website in French) began in 2025 and will run until 2028.



# >>> MUCF SPRING MEETINGS 2026

19

The MUCF Spring 2026 meetings will take place online or in-person. Below is the provisional schedule, though times may be adjusted as details are finalized:

## CEGS, REEG AND HEG SPRING 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

MARK YOUR  
CALENDARS!



**CEG Ornamentals:** 2026-03-02 | 09:30 – 17:00

**CEG Fruits and Vegetables:** 2026-03-04 | 09:30 – 17:00

**CEG Herbs and Spices:** 2026-03-11 | 13:30 – 16:30

**CEG Tobacco:** 2026-03-12 | 09:30 – 13:00

**CEG Hops:** the meeting will be held in-person on 2026-03-18/19 in the [Hop Research Center Hüll](#), located in Wolznach, Germany.

**CEG Seeds:** 2026-03-23 | 09:30 – 17:00

**Residues Expert Group (ReEG):** 2026-03-24 | 09:30-12:30

**Horizontal Expert Group (HEG):** 2026-03-26 | 09:30 – 12:30

**CEG Mushrooms:** The next meeting will be held in Autumn 2026

**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 AUTUMN MEETINGS 2026

## CEGS, REEG AND HEG AUTUMN MEETING

MARK YOUR  
CALENDARS!  
2026-10-27/29



Please reserve **27 to 29 October for the MUCF Autumn 2026** meeting. The venue will be announced no later than during the Spring 2026 sessions. Further details will follow, and fingers crossed that this meeting may take place in a warmer climate.

These expert group meetings continue to play a pivotal role in addressing minor use challenges, driving collaboration, and advancing crop protection solutions for minor uses in Europe.

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



- **CropLife Europe Conference 2026**

Theme: Regulatory conference on PPP registration.

Date: 2026-03-03/04

Location: Hybrid Conference, in Brussels and online.

For more details and registration links, visit <https://croplifeeurope.eu/cleconference2026/>

- **21st Reinhardsbrunn-Symposium**

Theme: A Symposium for fungicide scientists to discuss the latest research findings.

Date 2026-04-19/23

Location: H+-Hotel, Thüringer Wald, Friedrichroda, Germany.

For more details and registration links, visit <https://reinhardsbrunn-symposium.de/de/>

- **ISF World Seed Congress 2026**

Theme: To discuss on innovation, trade, and the future of the seed industry.

Date: 2026-05-18/20

Location: Lisbon, Portugal

For more details and registration links, [visit https://congress.worldseed.org/](https://congress.worldseed.org/)

- **32<sup>nd</sup> International Horticultural Congress**

Theme: IHC2026 has been set to “Exploring the Diversity of Horticulture”.

Date: 2026-08-23/28

Location: Kyoto International Conference Center, Kyoto, Japan

For more details and registration links, visit <https://www.ihc2026.org>

## >>> LITERATURE

### **Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* Moench.) as an emerging companion crop in annual cropping systems: a systematic review.**

Virili, A., Marusig, D., Delle Vedove, G., & Marraccini, E. Italian Journal of Agronomy (2024)  
<https://doi.org/10.4081/ija.2024.2218>

**Abstract:** Sustainable intensification is considered an efficient alternative to conventional agriculture to feed a growing population while maintaining and benefitting the environment. Intercropping is one of the most studied practices to obtain production gains and other ecosystem services. Most intercrops involve legumes and cereals, but other species combinations should be explored to further increase the diversity of intercropping systems. Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* Moench.; *Polygonaceae*) is an **emerging minor crop** which is gaining attention in alternative intercropping systems. This review provides a comprehensive view of the state of the art on the role of buckwheat as a companion crop in arable cropping systems. Despite buckwheat being well-known for its weed-suppressive ability, **intercropping using buckwheat for weed control** has received little attention. Few crops have so far been considered in relation to the introduction of buckwheat in annual cropping systems. This review uncovers a largely untapped research field involving buckwheat. The research perspectives are multiple as buckwheat consumption is increasing and its attractive flower resources and rapid growth offer the provision of several agro-ecosystem services that directly and indirectly benefit **crop yield stability**.





**SENDING YOU A  
FESTIVE CHEER &  
SEE YOU IN 2026!**



STAY IN CONTACT:



Minor Uses Coordination Facility  
21 Boulevard Richard Lenoir  
75011 Paris, France



[contact@minoruses.eu](mailto:contact@minoruses.eu)



+33 (0) 184790755