

Minor uses, major issue!



We are all in contact with ‘minor crops’ in our daily life mainly via the fruit and vegetables on our table. But if you have a garden, you may also face minor use problems. I experienced this during the summer. The box tree moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*) is spreading rapidly over Europe and it has also reached my garden. The box trees were infested and destroyed overnight by hundreds of caterpillars. Once again this made me think of the challenges growers face in protecting their crops against pests and diseases.



Larvae of *Cydalima perspectalis* (courtesy: Matteo Maspero and Andrea Tantardini, Centro MiRT - Fondazione Minoprio (IT)

The challenge for growers is to produce healthy crops, that are safe for the consumers while at the same time respect the environment. The use of fertilisers, biostimulants and pesticides should be kept to a minimum. More local production and more seasonal consumption of fruit and vegetables should be encouraged. These factors contribute to a sustainable agriculture.

The Coordination Facility aims to contribute to this challenge. In order to do this the long-term funding should be guaranteed. As I am writing this editorial the funding for next year is not yet secured. Soon Member States will be approached by the Coordination Facility with a request for a voluntary assessed contribution. Unfortunately, in every newsletter I have to come back to this issue. I sincerely hope that we can set up a stable long-term funding plan so that I don’t have to bother you every time with our delicate financial situation.

Switzerland is a new contributor to the funding. In this newsletter, an interview with Jan Waespe, new Swiss member of the Steering Group, is provided.

The MUCF was honoured to welcome a delegation of the PEST Committee from the European Parliament. It was an excellent opportunity to present the MUCF and its key role in European sustainable agriculture, and to express our concerns regarding financial security. Read more on this on page 2 in this newsletter.

Austria, holding the current presidency of the EU will host minor uses expert meetings in Vienna in October. Which ones? Find out in this newsletter.

I hope you all have enjoyed your summer break and had a good return to work, full of energy again to continue to work on solving minor use needs.

Jeroen Meeussen, Coordinator of the MUCF

Outline

- Visit from European Parliament p. 2
- Minor uses priorities, p. 2-4
- Guidance Document, p. 4
- Long-term funding, p. 4
- Minor uses expert meetings, p. 5-6
- EPPO Codes, p. 6
- Interview Jan Waespe, p. 6-7

Visit from the PEST Committee of the European Parliament

The PEST Committee is a Special Committee set up by the European Parliament to analyse and assess the authorisation procedure for pesticides in the European Union. They have to deliver their final report, including recommendations, by 12 December 2018.

To get a better picture of the situation with ‘minor uses’ in



the EU a meeting was held on the 5 July 2018 at the MUCF office in Paris. Mr Eric Andrieu, Chair of the PEST Committee was the Head of delegation. The EPPO Information officer gave a comprehensive overview about the historic background, tasks and achievements of EPPO. The Coordinator introduced the MUCF and explained what minor uses are and what the challenges are.

The delegation of the PEST Committee was surprised by the fact that a large part of the difficulty to find appropriate minor use solutions, stems from a non-harmonized pattern of three different zoning systems in the field of plant protection products. The differences in zones from a regulatory, efficacy and residue perspective make a harmonized approach on pesticides in the EU very difficult.

Another topic of discussion was the definition of ‘minor use’. For many stakeholders, the current definition of Article 3(26) of Regulation (EC) 1107/2009 of ‘minor use’ is not sufficiently clear as it is up to the individual EU Member States to define what is considered a minor use and a minor/major crop, and this leads to differences in Member States. This hampers the zonal procedure for authorisation of plant protection products (PPPs) and especially mutual recognition between EU Member States.

The possibility to have a Union definition, based on acreage, is under discussion with Member States and stakeholders. Based on such a definition an indicative list of ‘major crops’ could be set-up. A list of major crops would facilitate the zonal procedure and mutual recognition as every crop has a similar status in each Member State. Finally, the proposed approach may lead to a higher number of submissions for minor uses and would contribute to a level playing field for EU growers of speciality crops.

At the end of the meeting, there was a discussion on a controversial issue linked to the frequent application of Article 53 of Regulation (EC) 1107/2009 on emergency authorisations. It was confirmed that some Member States quite frequently grant derogations based on Article 53. This is also done to solve minor uses problems that are not emergencies in the strict sense of this provision. In order to prevent this kind of misuse of the provision, the Commission has developed a special guidance document for the application of Article 53.

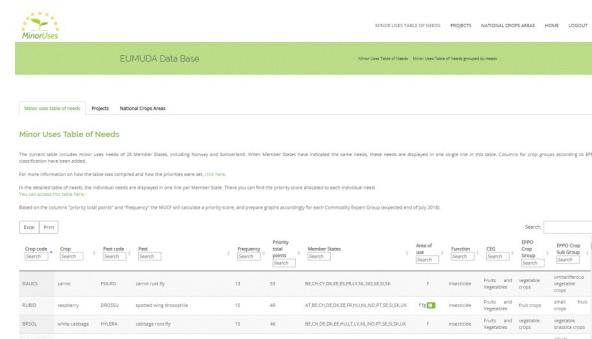
The PEST Committee calls in its draft report for a harmonised definition of ‘minor use’ in order to promote a level playing field, and recommends creating a single EU list of major crops. This report will make the European Parliament aware that the issues with ‘minor uses’ affect all EU agriculture and that the MUCF can contribute to find solutions for EU growers.

Further actions on minor uses priorities

Minor uses needs for 2018, provided by 24 EU Member States, plus Norway and Switzerland are online in EU-MUDA (see 6th newsletter). As you know, minor uses needs correspond to a combination of crop and pest (for example *Drosophila suzukii* on raspberry) and are indicated with EPPO Codes in the table of needs.

The number of needs recorded – 5387 needs listed by individual Member States and 2577 grouped needs- is impressive. This also shows the importance of the coordination of the work on minor uses in Europe. Because of the high number of recorded needs, the identification of the main priorities is a key step.

This summer the MUCF has further worked on how the most important priorities in Europe, per Commodity Expert Group, should be displayed. The main priorities are identified based on the total of priority points and frequency of grouped needs. You can access graphs per CEG in EU-MUDA, on the page of table of needs (https://eumuda.minoruses.eu/database/table_minor_uses).



The screenshot shows the EU-MUDA Data Base interface. At the top, there are navigation links: 'MINOR USES TABLE OF NEEDS', 'PROJECTS', 'NATIONAL CROPS AREAS', 'HOME', and 'LOGOUT'. Below the header, a sub-header reads 'Minor Uses Table of Needs' and 'EU-MUDA Data Base'. A note states: 'The current table includes minor uses needs of 26 Member States, including Norway and Switzerland. When Member States have indicated the same needs, these needs are displayed in one single line in this table. Columns for crop groups according to EPPO Commodity Expert Groups are included.' Below this is a detailed table of needs:

Crop code	Crop name	Pest code	Pest name	Priority		Member States	Area of use	Family	CEG	EPPO Crop Group	Sub Group
				Total	Score						
DAUSC	cantal	PSALRD	cantal root fly	13	53	BE, CY, DE, DK, FR, LU, NL, NO, SE, UK		Insecticide	Fruits and vegetables	fruits and vegetables	fruits and vegetables
AUBUS	raspberry	DAUOSU	spotted wing drosophila	15	49	AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, FR, LU, NL, PT, SE, SU, UK		Insecticide	Fruits and vegetables	fruits and vegetables	fruits and vegetables
BRDOL	wine cabbage	MLDEZA	wine cabbage root fly	15	40	BE, CH, DE, DK, LU, NL, PT, SE, SU, UK		Insecticide	Fruits and vegetables	fruits and vegetables	fruits and vegetables

Further actions on minor uses priorities (continued)

The MUCF performed a further analysis of the overall data. More than 80% of the needs concern fruits and vegetables, followed by 7% for the ornamentals, 7% for other crops (e.g. arable crops) and a very small percentage for hops, mushrooms, seeds, rice and tobacco (together under 3%). More needs are expected to be added for the seed sector (see page 5). You can see the proportion of needs split per respective CEGs in Figure 1.

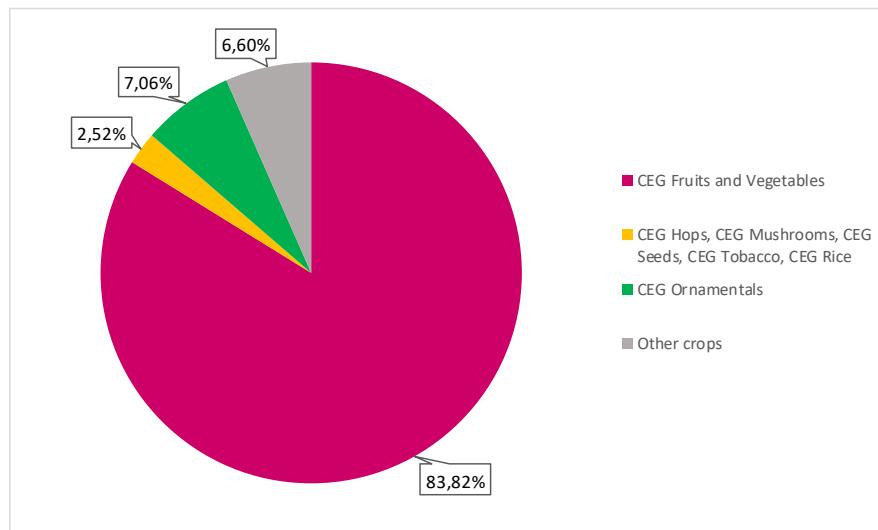


Figure 1: Distribution of minor uses needs per Commodity Expert Group

Within the group ‘fruits and vegetables’, vegetable crops represent a majority of the needs followed by fruits, herbs, spices and medicinal crops.

A majority of the needs concern insects (48%), then fungi (29%) and weeds (12%). The other needs on mites, viruses, bacteria, nematodes, plant growth regulators, molluscs and rodents represent each less than 5% of the total number of needs. See Figure 2.

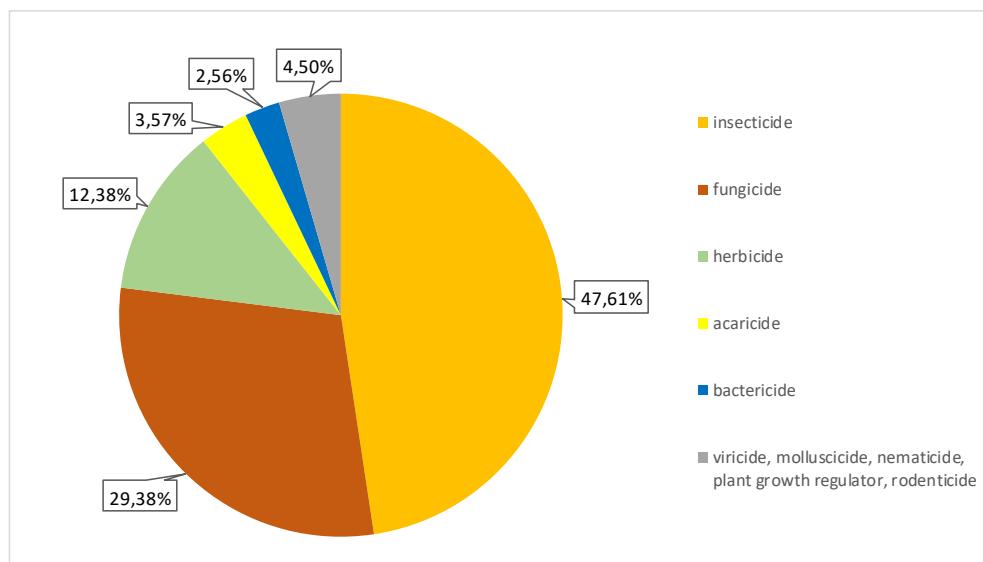


Figure 2: Distribution of minor uses needs per function

Currently 87 projects are registered in EUMUDA. The distribution of projects is roughly aligned with the needs, meaning that most of the projects are under the CEG Fruits and Vegetables (80%). The rest of projects in EUMUDA belong to the CEG Seeds (9%), Hops (6%) and Ornamentals (3%) and Mushrooms (1%).

Further actions on minor uses priorities (continued)

It should be noted that as projects can cover several needs, it can be expected that the total number of projects is lower than the number of needs. In order to move forward in establishing workplans under CEGs, a first step will be to identify which needs can be covered by existing projects and for which needs new projects need to be started. This work will be done in close cooperation with the CEGs. To achieve this the extrapolation rules for residues and efficacy play a key role.

A lot of progress has already been made to identify minor uses needs in Europe in cooperation with the countries. The MUCF, members of the CEGs, countries and other stakeholders (crop protection industry, scientific research) have much work ahead to continue solving minor uses issues.

Guidance Document on Minor Uses

The MUCF is making good progress with the Guidance Document on Minor Uses. In the previous newsletter we explained that differences in the situation of implementation of the minor use provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 create uncertainty and divergence between Member States. Clarification is therefore needed.

The current draft was discussed in the meeting of the PAI-Group (Post Approval Issues Group) that was held end of June 2018. Further discussions took place in a meeting with the (co-) Chairs of Minor Uses Expert Groups early July 2018. The MUCF took their comments into account and amended the document accordingly.

This amended version of the Guidance Document was circulated by the MUCF to the minor uses experts for commenting. The MUCF was pleased to see the high number of responses. More than 30 sets of comments were received broadly supporting the approach taken in the Guidance Document. The more critical issues raised in the comments will be discussed in the next meeting of the Horizontal Expert Group on 10 October 2018. After this session a (revised) document will be circulated to all Member States and stakeholders for comments.

Many stakeholders have identified the need to harmonize the definition of a ‘minor use’ in the EU. It was indicated by the PAI-Group, as well as by the (co-) Chairs that this important issue would most likely need more time for discussion. Therefore, this issue has been taken out of the Guidance Document in order not to delay the adoption of the document. The MUCF will continue the discussion on a harmonized list of minor/major crops in a separate document.

The aim is that the Guidance Document will be adopted by the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed to 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’. We hope to have an adopted Guidance Document early next year.

On the way to long-term funding?

The long-term funding and future organization of the MUCF is in the heart of the discussions with governments and will again be the main topic for the next meeting of the Minor Uses Steering Group.

On Monday 12 November 2018 the Steering Group will meet for the first time with its new members. Representatives from Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland will gather in Brussels.

Although the funding for 2018 has been guaranteed, the funding for 2019 and beyond is still not secured. Within the next weeks all Member States will be approached by the MUCF for a voluntary assessed contribution for 2019 and preferably also a commitment for the years beyond. Member States acknowledge the importance of the work of the MUCF (see ‘Further actions on minor uses priorities’ in this newsletter). Lack of funding will have serious consequences for the minor use work in all Member States.

In the EPPO Council meeting end of September, it has been decided that countries may pay their contribution to the MUCF alongside their EPPO contribution. This may open the door for more countries to contribute.

It is important that National Minor Uses Contact Points follow up on this issue actively in their respective Member States. A bit of pressure from your side can be very helpful.

Minor uses expert meetings

- Meeting with the CEG Seeds

In July 2018 two representatives of the CEG Seeds met with the MUCF in the EPPO headquarters in Paris. The following main issues were discussed: minor uses needs, ongoing projects, and concerns arising from the loss of active substances. As regards seeds we have to distinguish between seed production and seed treatment. When a crop is grown to harvest the seeds we speak about ‘seed production’ and when a seed is treated before sowing it is ‘seed treatment’.

Many of the minor uses needs for seed production are related to weeds, fungal diseases and desiccants. For seed treatment the concerns are mostly on fungal (damping-off) diseases, aphids and flies.



Onion plants grown for seed production (courtesy: FNAMS)



Seeds from diverse species (source: unknown)

Currently only a few needs of the CEG Seeds could be accepted and added to EUMUDA, because many of them covered large crop groups, while needs should preferably be specified at species level. It was agreed that the CEG will provide an update on minor uses needs specifying which needs are for seed production and which are for seed treatment.

It is planned that this will be validated by the relevant national minor uses contact points. The updated needs will then reflect more accurately the issues faced by the seed sector.

Progress was also made on the projects of the CEG Seeds. The meeting went through the CEG list of projects and identified projects already in EUMUDA and agreed on projects to be added (or not added) to EUMUDA. At the moment 8 projects are in EUMUDA and 3 are planned to be added.

It should be underlined that even if a CEG project has been completed (data has been generated) it is still very valuable to enter such a project in EUMUDA. An authorisation of the plant protection product may have already been granted in one Member State and other Member States may seek authorisation of the product on the same use.

The seed sector is facing important challenges as a number of active substances will no longer be available. In spring 2018 the MUCF performed extended searches on the Homologa database to find solutions for fungicidal seed treatments. A number of solutions are authorised in the European region, comprising biological seed treatments, and not surprisingly in North America, more (biological) solutions are already authorised. It was agreed that the MUCF will conduct additional Homologa searches for insecticidal seed treatments.

The MUCF would like to thank the CEG Seeds for their proactivity and the productive discussions.

- 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 we are pleased to organise our meetings in their capital. On Wednesday 10 October the Horizontal Expert Group will meet, followed by the CEG Fruit & Vegetables and the CEG Seeds on Thursday 11 October. On Friday morning the experts from the CEG Ornamentals and CEG Tobacco will have their meetings.

The meeting of the HEG will be the opportunity to discuss the Guidance Document on Minor Uses (see page 4). The annual survey on minor uses priorities and EU-MUDA will also be on the agenda of HEG/CEG meetings.

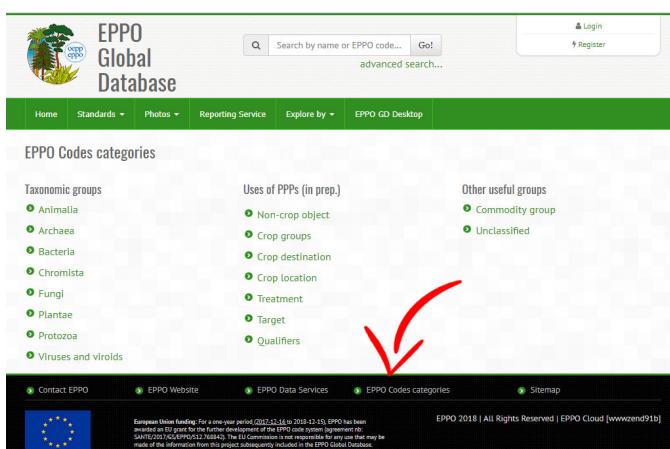
The CEG Hops will organise its meeting on 22-24 October 2018 in Slovenia. The other CEGs may schedule an autumn meeting or a teleconference.

- CEG- HEG 2019 spring meetings

In March 2019 the meetings of all the individual CEGs and the HEG will again be held at Square Meeting Centre in Brussels. The meetings will take place from Tuesday 26 March until Thursday 28 March. Please mark your calendars.

EPPO codes on Ornamentals, Weeds, and Plant Growth Regulators

As announced in the 5th and 6th newsletters, EPPO non-taxonomic groups (meaningful for authorisation of plant protection products) and corresponding EPPO Codes have been developed for Ornamental crops, Weeds, and also for Plant Growth Regulators (PGRs). The new groups and EPPO Codes are now online in EPPO Global Database (<https://gd.eppo.int>). They can be found by selecting 'EPPO Codes categories' at the bottom of the homepage of EPPO GD, then 'Crop groups' or 'Target'.



The screenshot shows the EPPO Global Database homepage with a green header bar containing links like Home, Standards, Photos, Reporting Service, Explore by, and EPPO GD Desktop. Below the header is a search bar and a login/register button. The main content area has three columns: Taxonomic groups (listing Animalia, Archaea, Bacteria, Chromista, Fungi, Plantae, Protozoa, and Viruses and viroids), Uses of PPPs (in prep.), and Other useful groups (listing Non-crop object, Crop groups, Crop destination, Crop location, Treatment, Target, and Qualifiers). At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with links for Contact EPPO, EPPO Website, EPPO Data Services, EPPO Codes categories, and Sitemap. A small note about EU funding is also present.

Sub-groups within Ornamentals and Weeds are limited compared to the high number of species concerned. Ornamentals are divided into two groups: terrestrial and aquatic plants, and terrestrial plants comprise the groups cactuses and succulents, herbaceous plants, and woody plants.

Weeds include dicotyledonous weeds, monocotyledonous weeds, as well as woody weeds, and other sub-groups such as aquatic weeds, fern weeds and (unwanted) mosses.



The screenshot shows the 'weeds (3WEEDT)' page of the EPPO Global Database. It includes a menu with 'Overview', basic information (EPPO code: 3WEEDT, Preferred name: weeds), notes (Any unwanted plants including volunteers), classification (Targets (3TARGETK), weeds (3WEEDT)), and direct children (a list of sub-categories like algae, aquatic weeds, dicotyledonous weeds, fern weeds, lichens, monocotyledonous weeds, mosses and liverworts, parasitic plants, and woody weeds).

Earlier in 2018 the MUCF prepared with the CEG Ornamentals a table of reference with ornamental species and a proposal of grouping in view of the EPPO Panel on Data Harmonization and EPPO Codes that took place in March. The MUCF is planning to update this reference table with the new EPPO groups and codes to facilitate the work of minor uses experts e.g. in EUMUDA.

The MUCF has already started to integrate these new EPPO groups and Codes in EUMUDA. We ask the minor uses experts, users of EUMUDA and other stakeholders involved in minor uses to make use of these codes for minor uses needs and projects. This will facilitate the coordination of the work and increase harmonization between countries.

Interview with Jan Waespe

Jan Waespe is a national minor uses contact point for Switzerland and new member of the Minor Uses Steering Group.

- What is your background and what is your role in the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG)?

I studied microbiology with a specialization in plant protection. I wrote my master thesis about the biological control of fire blight. After a few years in the quality management of a pharmaceutical company, I started working at the Federal Office for Agriculture. The first 3 years I worked in the registration of plant protection products. Thereafter I became responsible for developing and implementing the Swiss action plan to reduce the risks of plant protection products. One of the measures of the action plan is to better solve protection problems for minor uses.

- How did you learn about the activities of the MUCF?

The first time I learnt about the MUCF was in 2015. In the action plan we aimed to join the MUCF to better solve minor uses problems. After we received the proposal for long term funding with the invitation for other countries to support the MUCF in 2017, we decided to join the MUCF.



Jan Waespe (FOAG)

- Switzerland is now co-funding the MUCF and has been elected as a member of the Minor Uses Steering Group. What do you want to achieve with the Steering Group?

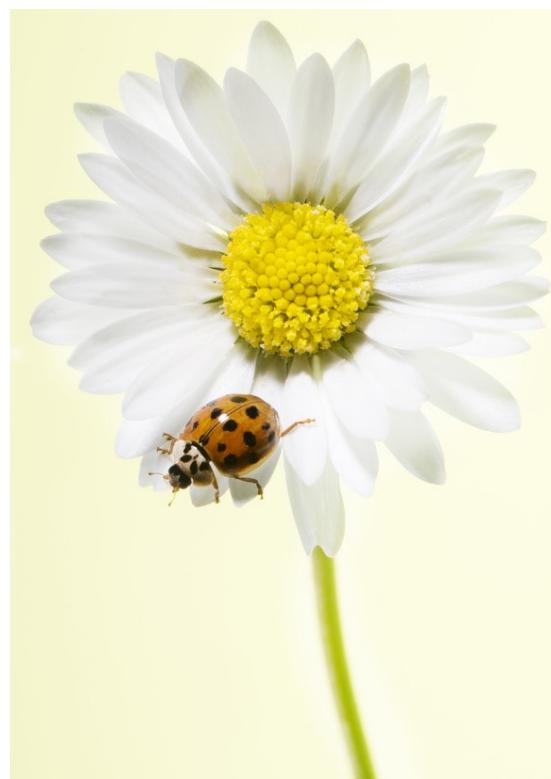
Specialty crops are economically important for agriculture and play an essential role in a balanced diet. But because of the small cultivation surface they are of lower importance for the plant protection industry and researchers. In the last two decades a lot of plant protection products have been withdrawn. Particularly in specialty crops this had led to important gaps in plant protection. To enlarge the incentive to develop protection solutions for these crops, it is important to define common regulatory requirements (e.g. a common definition of minors use for each zone) and to share information and work between countries.

- What is your experience with the MUCF so far and do you have some recommendations?

I experienced the MUCF as cooperative and pragmatic. I hope the MUCF will keep these abilities, we will need pragmatic solutions.

- What are the main general issues Switzerland would like the MUCF and minor uses experts to consider?

As already mentioned, a common definition of minor uses for each of the 3 different zones would be helpful. Furthermore, extrapolation possibilities for risk assessment and management from other authorized uses should be maximized. Finally, it is important to search sustainable solutions in the framework of IPM.



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