

Minor uses, major issue!



Time flies

Time seems to have passed very quickly. This is already our 10th newsletter.

The current Chairs and Co-chairs of the Commodity Expert Groups have already completed their first three-year term, so elections were held last March. I would like to thank all Chairs and Co-chairs for their support to the work of the Coordination Facility and their efforts to solve minor uses needs and I wish the newcomers success in their new roles.

In Newsletter No 6 we interviewed Vivian Powell who worked on the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board, an important growers' association in the United Kingdom. She retired at the end of April 2019. The Coordination Facility wants to thank her for all her valuable contributions to take the issue of minor uses forward. We wish her a well-deserved retirement.



Happy retirement to Vivian!

Last year we completed our first survey on Minor Uses Needs and priorities. In April we launched the 2019 Survey. Already the first countries have provided their updated lists. You can read more about the survey on page 4.

And last but not least I have to come back to the issue of the long-term funding of the Coordination Facility. Although two additional countries, Finland and Slovenia, have committed to contribute to the funding of the Coordination Facility, the financial situation remains critical.

Soon requests for contributions for the minor uses work in 2020 will be sent out. We count on your active support and contributions.

Jeroen Meeussen,
Coordinator of the MUCF



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SPRING MINOR USES EXPERT MEETINGS

The Commodity Expert Groups (CEG) and Horizontal Expert Group (HEG) were held in Brussels from 26 to 28 March 2019 and were attended by more than 120 participants from 20 different countries.

A point that was on the agenda of every CEG was the (re-)election of a Chair and Co-chair as the current ones already had completed their three-year term.

After the elections in the different CEGs there are still vacancies for Co-chair of CEG Ornamentals and CEG Rice. If you are interested to fulfil this position please contact the MUCF.

• Plenary session - basic substances

For the plenary session on Wednesday morning 27 March a variety of topics was scheduled. An update on basic substances was provided by Patrice Marchand from ITAB, Institut de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation biologiques. In the EU, ITAB is the main dossier submitter regarding basic substances. Basic substances are commodity substances that are not predominantly used for plant protection purposes but nevertheless are useful in plant protection (e.g. beer for trapping, fructose, sucrose, vinegar).

Article 23 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 contains specific provisions for 'basic substances'. In addition, the Commission has published a Working Document on Basic Substances (SANCO/10363/2012 rev.9) that describes in detail the approval process for basic substances. In general, these basic substances are of low concern and are from different origin: foodstuff, products from natural origin (mineral, animal, plant decoction) and low-risk chemicals. The application dossier consists mainly of efficacy data from field trials and a compilation of a literature search.

If a basic substance is approved all farmers in the European Union can use it for the indicated use as no national authorization is required and no individual products will be placed on the market. Most basic substances are also available for organic growers.

Currently, 20 basic substances are approved. All information on these substances, their uses and the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) tables are publicly available on the EU Pesticide database (<http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/eu-pesticides-database/public/?event=activesubstance.selection&language=EN>).

Hopefully, more basic substances will be approved in the next years as they can also play an important role in solving minor uses issues especially considering the substantial number of non-renewed and withdrawn (conventional) active substances.

Hereafter you can find short summaries of the discussions in the different CEGs.

• CEG Fruits & Vegetables

The CEG Fruits & Vegetables again had 40 participants. The group discussed the possibility of splitting up into two groups: CEG Fruits and CEG Vegetables. After some discussion it was decided to remain one group but with separate sections on the agenda for fruits and vegetables when necessary.

Tim Johnson from Marrone Bio Innovations (MBI) gave an interesting lecture on the advantages and possibilities of biopesticides in pest control.



He also provided an overview of the active substances MBI has in the pipeline. Unfortunately, it seems more difficult to obtain a registration for biopesticides in the EU compared to the US.

The group was updated on the ongoing projects from the project leaders and some new topics were launched.

• CEG Hops

Two new projects were proposed to be added to EUMUDA: flupyradifurone and acetamiprid, both active substances against Damson-hop aphid.

A detailed table of needs with distinct priority settings from the expert viewpoint was developed within the CEG Hops and added as supplementary information in EUMUDA.

The CEG Hops continues to be highly concerned about the application of new cut-off criteria for active substances within the EU. The danger of losing too many active substances for an adequate hop production within the EU is imminent.

• CEG Mushrooms

The project on fluopyram against *Dactylium dendroides* was discussed. The first residue analyses made on mushrooms and spent mushroom compost were considered too high by Bayer. A new trial is currently being made by the French technical centre for mushrooms, with a reduced application rate (half the dose). Based on the new results, it will be decided if the project will continue or has to be terminated.

The CEG Mushrooms decided to launch another project on the efficacy of 4 active substances, of which one is a biopesticide, against *Dactylium dendroides*. The trials will be performed by Inagro (Belgium), CTICH (Spain) and the French technical centre for mushrooms.

• CEG Ornamentals

About 10 countries from the 3 EU zones presented an overview of the plant protection products that had been authorized in their countries in the past year for ornamentals. Further information on these authorizations (e.g. which chemical companies were involved) will be provided shortly after the meeting to check whether there are authorizations that can be used for mutual recognition. This will allow all countries individually to start preparing dossiers for new plant protection products. Other topics that were discussed were related to the status of plant growth regulators, products against soil-borne diseases and the use of the Homologa database containing registration information on agrochemical products.

• CEG Seeds

As a result of IBMA's effort to share the CEG Seeds priority list of needs for seed treatment and/or seed production, several of IBMA's members sent information on possible solutions with their products. The CEG Seeds was happy to receive this response, discussed the potential solutions and decided on next steps. Koppert Biological Systems was already invited to the March meeting. They presented their products in development for seed and shared issues they face regarding registration of biopesticides in Europe.



Representatives of BASF and Syngenta joined the meeting by teleconference. They updated the CEG Seeds on the renewal status of several active substances. Their products in development for seed treatment and possible involvement of the CEG Seeds were discussed.

The representative of the French seed producers association presented some research done on alternatives to chemical desiccants. This is more urgent now that the often used active substance diquat is not renewed. Agreements were made to share more information from several countries on this subject.

• CEG Tobacco

The Tobacco Commodity Expert Group was attended by 10 participants from France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Macedonia and Spain. Since the last meeting in October 2018 10 new plant protection products were authorized on tobacco in 5 countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain. There are difficulties in renewing the approval of some active substances that are important for tobacco growing. The renewal of authorizations is extremely difficult or severely restricted in countries such as France, Greece and Spain.

Control of suckers is essential for tobacco production and new solutions are needed to replace current solutions. The European tobacco sector is highly interested in the registration of the active substance flumetralin. In addition, further information was provided on trials for new projects against nematodes, weeds, aphids, thrips, blue mould and the parasitic plant broomrape.

The table of needs and priorities for tobacco was discussed in detail and countries were requested to provide updates.

In addition, CEG Tobacco has prepared a compilation of registered plant protection products for tobacco in Europe.

• CEG Herbs

CEG Herbs met for the first time as a 'Candidate Commodity Expert Group' under the umbrella of the EU Minor Uses Coordination Facility. As long as the long-term funding of the MUCF has not been guaranteed no new CEG can be established and therefore this group is called 'Candidate CEG Herbs'. The participants welcomed the interaction with minor uses experts from other disciplines and having the possibility to discuss common issues with other CEGs.

A representative of the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture presented the work that is carried out in Austria on herbs at national and international level. As solutions are urgently needed Austria created in June 2016 a Steering Group on Minor Uses to coordinate the work on herbs at international level.

An update was provided on the ongoing projects.

CEG and HEG autumn 2019 meetings

The autumn minor uses expert meetings will be held between 30 October and 01 November 2019 in Dublin. The Horizontal Expert Group will meet, as well as some of the Commodity Expert Groups. We are now developing the agenda and by mid-July the registration for these meetings will be opened.

Participants to previous meetings will receive an invitation letter. The details will also be announced on our website.

Residues and minor uses

At the IUPAC/ECPA conference (22-23 May 2019, Ghent, Belgium) there was a special session dedicated to residues, the setting of Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) and the relevance for minor uses.

MRLs are trading standards set by every jurisdiction individually. In 2004, there were 5 lists and it is expected that there will be more than 35 different lists by the end of 2019. Ideally there should be one MRL where all countries defer to the CODEX MRL as trading standard.

The following factors complicate the setting of MRLs for minor uses. (i) Minor Uses are not a company priority; (ii) Minor Uses require third party funding; (iii) Crop damage is at the risk of the end user. In addition, these minor uses are often directly related to (unprocessed) human food (contrary to maize, wheat, soya beans), have a complex pest pressure and only limited damage is considered acceptable. And there can be many different production regions where the Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) can also vary significantly.

To support the MRL setting for minor uses CODEX crop groupings have been established to facilitate the establishment of MRLs for a large number of crops based on residue data from a small number of crops.

A joint project on global zoning & exchangeability of data from field trials on residues between zones was carried out between US EPA, PMRA (Canada), IR-4 (the minor uses project in the US) and CropLife America. The question to investigate was “How important are geographic zones in determining MRLs?” Currently crop field trials are required to be conducted in a variety of (specified) zones and the zones are specific to each country/region. But, zonal or geographical differences may not have as much of an impact on residues as is commonly believed. In addition, there is a major advantage to a MRL setting process in being able to combine field trials from across a larger (global) database. In this way a more robust MRL can be estimated.

The analysis of the results from this project indicates that there is no statistically significant systematic overall difference in pesticide residues resulting from supervised field trials conducted with the same agricultural practices in different global zones.

A detailed publication can be found at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2330443X.2018.1555068>

Survey 2019 on minor uses needs and priorities

Following the 2018 survey the MUCF launched the ‘Survey 2019 on minor uses needs and priorities’ in April this year. The National Minor Uses Contact Points from all Member States (plus Norway and Switzerland) have been requested to provide their updated list of minor uses needs and priorities by 30 June 2019. The MUCF will then compile all the information and display the updated EU minor uses priorities in EUMUDA in September/October.

It is critical that the information in EUMUDA is kept updated as this is the starting point to solve minor uses issues at European level.

To find more information on the ‘Survey 2019’ [click here](#)

Update of the Minor Uses Website

The MUCF has created a new web page “**Member States Publications**”. We want to use this page as a platform to disseminate relevant information on minor uses. Publications in all EU languages can be included. So far, we have articles from Austria and Poland. We invite also other Member States to send us relevant articles that have been published in their countries about minor uses.

