



# EU MINOR USES COORDINATION FACILITY

## Newsletter

No. 4, October-November-December 2017

### Minor uses, major issue!



Time flies. With 2016 still fresh in our minds, 2017 is almost over. This last year was important for the Coordination Facility and we achieved a great deal. It was the first year that the Coordination Facility was fully staffed and therefore we could make considerable progress. One of the highlights was the launch of the new minor uses database EUMUDA. We see that more and more people are starting to use EUMUDA and more organizations refer to it on their websites. It is considered *the* source of information for minor uses in the EU.

In 2017 we have issued our first series of newsletters to keep subscribers informed about everything that is in the field of minor uses. We would welcome contributions from Member States and stakeholders. Maybe that can be a New Year's resolution for you!



The Third Global Minor Uses Summit, in early October, in Montreal was a success. More than 225 delegates from 34 countries met and discussed for four days minor use issues from a global perspective. If we really want to make progress we have to push boundaries and look at things from a global, or EU perspective and we should not be short-sighted and only consider national viewpoints. The Coordination Facility will participate in a number of follow-up projects. If you want to know which ones, you have to continue reading this newsletter!

But it is not all sunshine and roses. Currently, the Coordination Facility is co-financed by the European Commission and a consortium of three Member States (France, Germany, the Netherlands). This financing will end in April 2018, when the grant agreement for the fund expires. But we are optimistic that we can continue our work! We have received many positive signals from Member States that they greatly appreciate the work of the Coordination Facility and that they are willing to contribute to the funding. The Coordination Facility is on its way to sustainable funding and we are confident that we can continue our important work to solve minor uses issues in the EU!

With my best wishes for the New Year!

Jeroen Meeussen, Coordinator of the MUCF

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## Feedback from the Global Minor Uses events

The Pest Management Centre, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada hosted the Global Minor Uses Summit (GMUS-3) which took place from 1 – 4 October 2017 in Montreal, Canada.

The event was attended by participants from all the major regions of the globe (Europe, Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania). The Summit focused on regulatory, industry and grower challenges.

The Coordination Facility was not only a member of the Organizing Committee, but also presented the work of the MUCF, as well as the regulatory hurdles we face in the EU.

The MUCF will be involved in the follow-up of the following conclusions and recommendations of the GMUS:

- Establish minor use champions from regions, to participate in annual meetings and workshops, communicate global activities and upcoming events
- Review and publish a list of substances exempt from MRLs (such as most biopesticides and compounds of no toxicological concern)
- Explore mechanisms to have a Global MRL Database which is accessible and publicly available
- Explore as to whether the EUMUDA database can also eventually host the Global Minor Uses Database
- Develop an international crop grouping scheme for efficacy/target safety data for non-food crops
- Review various definitions of minor crops and identify commonalities and differences.



The Second Global Minor Use Priority Setting Workshop was linked to the GMUS-3. The MUCF submitted a priority list on behalf of the EU. The workshop selected three projects for research, one each in a temperate, a tropical and a greenhouse crop system: downy mildew on basil, nematodes on banana and thrips on ornamentals, respectively. Each project was selected along with backup projects in each area.

More information can be found on the Global Minor Use Portal: <http://www.gmup.org/>

## Seminar on minor uses developments in Ireland

Prior to the series of minor uses expert meetings in Dublin (see pages 3-4), a seminar on 'Plant protection developments in the horticultural and speciality crop sector' in Ireland was organized by the Irish Ministry, department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, on 31 October 2017.

Presentations were given by representatives from the MUCF, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB, from the UK), Copa-Cogeca and the Irish Farmers Association (IFA). Around 100 participants were present.



The Irish government has a pragmatic approach towards minor uses. Ireland has already solved numerous minor uses needs nationally and is actively participating in the HEG and some CEGs. There has been a high increase in off label uses, made possible thanks to improved access to data (some with financial compensation), mutual recognition, extrapolation, communication and cooperation with authorization holders and the horticultural sector. The AHDB conducts various research programmes in the UK such as Sceptre Plus for ornamentals or the AMBER project for biopesticides, that can also be of interest for Ireland, and other countries and stakeholders. The IFA made it clear that minor crops are of high value in Ireland and that horticulture is a key sector, with the highest farmgate output. However, horticultural production in Ireland is small compared to horticulture in Europe. Copa- Cogeca highlighted the importance of speciality crops in the European region. All stakeholders should realize this and take appropriate actions to support minor uses and create a level playing field for European growers of speciality crops.

## Minor uses expert meetings in Dublin

Our Irish minor uses colleagues kindly hosted some meetings of the Minor Uses Experts Groups this autumn. From 1 to 3 of November, the meetings of the Horizontal Expert Group (HEG), and of the Commodity Expert Groups (CEG) on Fruits & Vegetables, Ornamentals, Seeds and Tobacco took place in Dublin castle, in the historic heart of the city.

In the castle also banners from IBMA were displayed that showed candidates and winners of the Bernard Blum award (see page 7). This provided insight to the experts on the novel biocontrol technologies that are in the pipeline, such as vibrational mating disruption.



The HEG was once again very well attended with 39 participants, and 18 countries represented. The HEG participants made it clear that the Guidance Document on Minor Uses is very much awaited. This Guidance Document will describe the process from minor use need to a solution, will be a compact overview on all registration issues and will focus on differences between Member States in the interpretation of regulatory aspects. Some items will be related to EUMUDA. The MUCF will plan a meeting of the drafting group in early 2018.

Breakout groups were formed within the HEG and discussed how to facilitate minor use authorisation. We can cite a few conclusions:

- Establish one zone for minor uses applications (Article 51)
- Establish a simplified set of procedures for minor uses applications
- Start a pilot project to see what is and what is not working in each group

The MUCF will include conclusions as appropriate in the Guidance Document on Minor Uses.

The HEG welcomed the work of France on the 'Catalogue of Uses', which can be considered as the French reference list of minor uses. You can access to this Catalogue via the EUMUDA homepage [www.eumuda.eu](http://www.eumuda.eu).

The 'database for the management/evaluation of uses regarding the future of active substances' is a useful tool for France to develop the work programme. Other Member States are encouraged to develop similar tools.

Three MUCF documents were noted by the HEG:

- Rules for participation in expert group meetings
- Rules for the establishment of a new Commodity Expert Group
- Rules for access rights and confidentiality in EUMUDA

These documents were approved by the Steering Group meeting on 22 November and will soon be available on the MUCF website. However, it should be noted that no new CEG can be established until the long-term funding of the MUCF has been secured (see page 5).

New IT features of EUMUDA were presented to the CEGs (see page 6).

The **CEG Fruits and Vegetables** presented an update on the numerous ongoing projects. Overall, they concern weeds in vegetables, insects, - mostly on fruits, and diseases on vegetables, basil and various other crops. The CEG has already entered 21 projects in EUMUDA. Biocontrol solutions are in the scope for new projects. The CEG has started to consider the EU priority list prepared for the GMUS (see pages 2 and 6). Some of the issues of the CEG are shared with those of the CEG seeds e.g. for seed application.

In the **CEG Seeds** experts presented an overview of the priority needs in seed production and as seed treatments, primarily in vegetables. In seed production growth regulation (desiccants), weeds and fungal diseases are the most important issues. For seed treatment several seed and soil borne diseases have to be covered, as well as control of flies and aphids. For these needs projects should be initiated. Needs become more urgent as nowadays there are fewer and fewer active substances available. Six projects have been entered in EUMUDA, mostly for weeds on vegetables.

The **CEG Ornamentals** proposed new projects such as on thrips, caterpillars, fusarium, growth regulation, weeds and soil disinfection. Also Member States such as Sweden, Portugal and Italy showed their interest in joining. An IPM approach from the Netherlands on thrips control was presented, where steps taken follow the general principles of IPM including prevention, monitoring, decision on treatment, use of non-chemical methods, and the use of plant protection products if necessary. Trial results from Germany for trips control with conventional chemicals and biochemicals were also presented.

The **CEG Tobacco** focused on renewal programmes for active substances (AIR) and new projects related to mold diseases, and various insects such as worms. Results and planning of trials were discussed for these projects.



## Minor uses expert meetings in Dublin - continued

A summary of the reports of the meetings of the Horizontal Expert Groups and of the CEG chairs will soon be made available on the MUCF website.

The MUCF is very grateful to Donal Lynch for his very efficient support in the organization of the expert meetings in Dublin and his invitation to participate in the seminar. The next meetings of the HEG and all CEGs will be held in Brussels, 13 to 15 March 2018.

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## CEG Hops

A meeting of the **Commodity Expert Group on Hops** took place on 18-19 October in Obernai in France. Obernai is a typical town in Alsace, close to Strasbourg.

Mr Wolfgang Sichelstiel has resigned as Chair of the CEG Hops. The MUCF wants to thank him for the work he has done on hops over the past years. The CEG Hops is a well structured and well organised group with a considerable output. Mr Florian Weihrauch will act as 'interim' Chair of the CEG Hops until a new Chair has been elected.



A short report of the 2017 field season was presented by the attending Member States. These trials can develop into future projects. Currently, for hops 54 minor use needs have been entered in EUMUDA and these relate to 20 different pests and diseases. There are 4 ongoing projects in hops: on European hop flea beetle, Damson-hop aphid, annual meadow grass, and defoliation.

Since June 2016 hop is classified in Germany as major crop (>10 000 ha). Hence, nearly all uses changed from minor to major. This leads to difficulties in the registration processes as Article 51 may no longer apply.

During the HEG meeting Johan Roman announced his resignation as chair of the group. The MUCF thanks Johan for his great efforts to take the minor uses issue forward at EU-level and his continuous efforts to have active participation from all HEG-members. You will find a short interview with Johan Roman hereafter.

As there is a vacancy for the position of 'Chair HEG', the MUCF has encouraged members to submit their nomination. A new Chair will be appointed in the next meeting of the HEG in March 2018.

## Ten years involvement in EU Minor Uses Interview with Johan Roman



*Johan Roman, ex-chair of the HEG*

### What were the main achievements in minor uses over the years?

*Johan Roman:* I joined the minor uses community as Coordinator of the EU Technical Group North the moment the Commission had to downsize their involvement with the Minor Use Technical Groups North and South as they had to work on the revision of Directive (EEC) No 91/414 into Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009. In order not to lose the momentum and to profit from the trust that was built in the previous years, a proxy Technical Group continued, unfortunately with a limited number of Member States. That Technical Group basically transformed into the Horizontal Expert Group. With the frozen vegetable group's (Profel) approach as a model, a Fruit Group was created, which soon blended with what is now known as CEG Fruits and Vegetables. Shortly after that an ornamental group, a hops group, a rice group, a tobacco group and a seeds group were established.

Together with delegates from Germany, France, and the Netherlands, I had a strong involvement with the design of the EU Minor Uses Coordination Facility, which I consider as a major achievement for minor uses. I am very proud of that.

## Ten years involvement in EU Minor Uses Interview with Johan Roman– continued

### What is your experience with the MUCF?

*Johan Roman:* The MUCF is of great importance for the minor use community and its establishment was very much welcomed. The staff are highly dedicated, each of them with their own background and experience, and capable of supporting the minor uses community. The MUCF initially focussed on getting the Facility up and running, but now it is time to have the focus on supporting the EU minor use groups.

It is time to reach out to the EU minor uses groups and ask what do they need from MUCF, what do they need to close their minor uses gaps, what are the barriers they are facing. This is needed in order to take their concerns fully to heart and search, together with the groups, for (creative) solutions, pushing the limits of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009.

### What is your recommendation for minor uses?

*Johan Roman:* It should not be a surprise when I say, MUCF go tell it to the people; go out to those Member States which currently are not yet actively involved. Their contribution matters!

Make yourself actively known to the community you are serving! Don't become an institute on your own, but be constantly aware for whom you are working for, being the minor uses community.

This with the ultimate goal in mind, to come to a real EU harmonized approach for solving minor uses needs, to enable EU growers to produce and last but not least to provide EU citizens with speciality crops on their daily menu. To arrive at the end of the day at the so desired level playing field.

For the CEGs to be considered as *the* platform to jointly work on the technical closure of EU minor use gaps, I would say keep up the good work and join forces as much as possible. There is still room for improvement to make the work more efficient.

For the HEG, be more pro-active; the members should flag issues for further consideration. Make it a push rather than a pull approach, to share experiences, to learn from one another in improving regulatory processes, with an open mind. Don't focus too much on differences, but focus on how to use information in taking issues forward in the light of the development of an EU approach. Continue with the way of arranging for HEG meetings as we did in Dublin recently, having a thematic approach through small breakout groups.

As there is a lot of interest in joining the HEG, thus becoming a large group with the associated dynamics, the breakout groups as were introduced, are more 'user friendly' and as a consequence there is much more exchange resulting in valuable input for further discussions.

All-in all, it has been a great pleasure and privilege to work with Minor Uses and work for Minor Uses. Wishing you all the very best.

### On the way to long-term funding

A priority for the Coordination Facility is to ensure longer term financial sustainability, beyond the first three years, by encouraging financial commitments from all Member States.

Currently, the funding of the Coordination Facility has been guaranteed by France, Germany and the Netherlands for the first three years until April 2018. Several other Member States have already indicated their willingness to contribute to the funding of the Coordination Facility. As it is clear that minor uses problems will not all be resolved in three years, a long-term plan (10-years) and a strategy to secure funds to guarantee at least a 10-year operation of the Coordination Facility, was prepared and discussed with Member States in meetings of the SCOPAFF, as well as at the Stakeholder Advisory Forum on 25 January 2017.

A letter from the European Commission on the long-term funding of the MUCF was circulated to Permanent Representatives of the Member States in September 2017. The issue of the long-term funding of the MUCF was also discussed in the AGRI-FISH Council meeting on 9 October 2017. The MUCF has now approached Member States individually with a request for voluntary assessed contributions.

The MUCF has developed different scenarios depending on the funding that it will receive. In the worst-case scenario, only basic staffing will be maintained to participate in expert working groups, EUMUDA will be maintained but without any further development, and there will be no reimbursement for expenses for expert working groups. We are confident that we will receive sufficient funding so that we can continue our work. At the time of issuing this newsletter the MUCF has already received financial contributions from, Sweden, Belgium, Slovakia and Germany.



## The REFIT is ongoing

The REFIT programme (Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme) is organised by the European Commission to see if existing legislation is (still) fit for purpose, and to improve existing EU legislation.

Regarding the REFIT process the Commission has launched an evaluation study and a contractor has started work. Stakeholder consultation will take place by means of questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires for public consultation and online stakeholder consultation is now open! The final report from the contractor should be available by the end of May 2018. The following website can be consulted for the latest status of the REFIT process: [https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/refit\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/refit_en)

The MUCF organised a plenary session to gather input for the REFIT process, followed by sessions in four Breakout Groups back in March 2017. A report with an overview of the conclusions of the Breakout Groups can be found on our website. Some overall conclusions are:

- National specific requirements should be removed (at least for minor uses)
- Residue data from outside the EU is considered acceptable (comparable GAP and GLP)
- MRL applications should be maximally extrapolated
- Trust between member States is required.

The report of the conclusions of the Breakout Groups will be used as input for the contractor to identify the topics in the framework of the REFIT that are relevant for minor uses.

On 12 September the MUCF attended a meeting organized by the contractor. One of the objectives was to draw the attention to specific points in the regulations that we want to see addressed in the REFIT process.

The MUCF raised issues related to a lack of an EU-wide definition for minor uses, the interpretation of Article 51 (3) in where it is stated that Member States may facilitate minor uses, and comparative assessment where Member States should ‘take minor uses into account’. These provisions are quite differently interpreted by Member States and as a result move away from harmonisation.

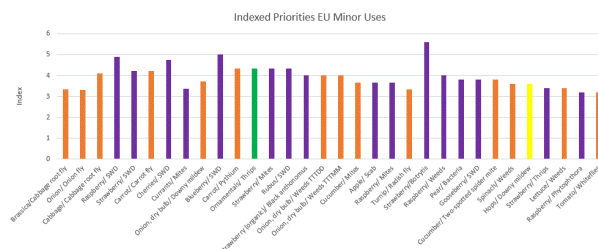
Overall, the meeting was well perceived. A follow-up meeting will be organised when the contractor has prepared the draft report.

## EUMUDA is making progress

After its launch in June 2017 the new EUMUDA has continued to be populated and starting to play its role as central tool to solve minor uses issues.

Results of the survey organized by the MUCF on Member States minor uses needs and priorities have been added to EUMUDA. This work was done in preparation for the Global Minor Use Priority Setting Workshop of October 2017. The MUCF is planning to display priorities per Commodity Expert Groups in EUMUDA. This will allow the CEG members and other stakeholders (industry) to more easily identify the minor uses priorities.

The current data are only from 14 Member States and Norway. The MUCF is planning to ask Member States who did not reply to provide information. This will then allow to present a complete picture of European minor uses priorities.



*EU priorities on minor uses needs,  
available in EUMUDA*

The MUCF is pleased to inform you that rules for access rights and confidentiality have now been approved by the Minor Uses Steering Group and are published on EUMUDA. The rules concern, in particular, individual projects as they contain confidential business information from crop protection companies. The MUCF is working on implementing these rules in the database.

New IT features are available! It is now possible for a project leader to copy a project and therefore minimize the work. In addition, project plans can be downloaded in Word format. A project plan is set for each project. It allows the mapping of who does what and when in a project. Some information will automatically be filled in from EU-MUDA and other information needs to be entered. The MUCF is working on developing other features such as downloading a whole project as a Word document.

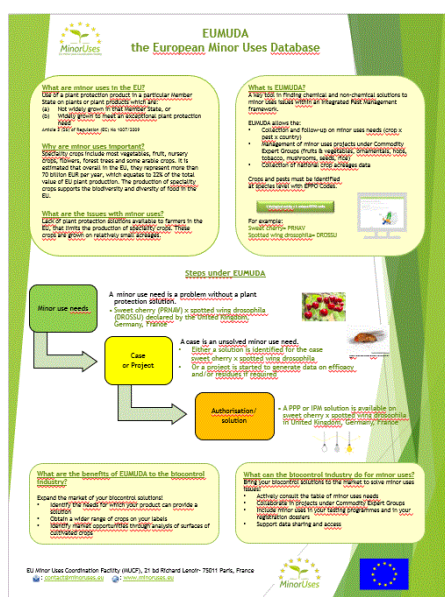


## Engaging with the biocontrol industry

Not only are minor uses expanding but biocontrol is too. This year the Annual Biocontrol Industry Meeting (ABIM) gathered for the first time ever since the first meeting was held, back in 2006 more than 1000 participants!

The Bernard Blum Award was granted to CBC Europe for their product Tremos, a tool allowing mating disruption of leafhopper species through vibrations. Thanks to David Cary, executive director of the International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA), the banners with candidates for the Award travelled from Basel to Ireland to be displayed at the minor uses meetings in Dublin to increase the knowledge and interest of experts on novel biocontrol technologies!

The ABIM was a great opportunity for the MUCF to present a poster on EUMUDA showing the benefits for the biocontrol industry by participating to the minor uses work e.g. in projects. The poster will soon be available on the MUCF website.



The MUCF also attended a meeting IBMA France to present the MUCF, EUMUDA and its projects. Jean-Claude Malet and Xavier Langlet from the French Ministry of Agriculture were also present. IBMA France is the biggest national group of IBMA and the French government is very active in minor uses work, nationally and at European level. Increasing the participation of the biocontrol industry in solving minor uses issues is a major action point for the MUCF.

## Dutch Herb Growers

The Coordination Facility had the opportunity to meet the organisation of Dutch Herb Growers (VKN). The VKN has been a leader for more than sixty years in the growing, preserving, importing and storing of all kinds of herbs: aromatic herbs for the food industry, as well as medicinal herbs for the pharmaceutical industry.

The VKN is part of EUROPAM, the European Herb Growers Association. Members are: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Poland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Switzerland is an observer member.



The main herbs grown by the VKN members are parsley and valerian. Around 80% of the harvested herbs are exported to the US. A major problem in the EU is the withdrawal of herbicides. In addition, several PPPs are authorized in Germany, but not in the Netherlands (no 'level playing field').

In general, herbs (culinary, medicinal, extraction) are considered 'very-very minor' crops in which agro-chemical companies do not wish to invest resources.

Herb growers do have some specific problems: MRLs for herbs are often set at the "level of detection" (LOD). Because most herbs will be processed (dried), residues can concentrate/increase in the end use product. As a result, residues may not be determined in the fresh product, whereas residues could be exceeded in the dried product. Another issue is that on a regular basis, the VKN found exceeding pesticides MRLs, that are not authorized for use on valerian. These pesticide residues in the soil may have been heavily accumulated by the fine root system of valerian.

For competitive conventional production of herbs a minimum number of effective plant protection products, authorised for use and with reasonable MRLs, need to be available. Because of the very low application rate it should also be made easier to extrapolate from other crops (e.g. vegetables).

## EPPO Standard for low-risk plant protection products

As mentioned in the Second Newsletter, the MUCF was part of the *ad hoc* Expert Working Group of EPPO on low-risk active substances and actively involved in the preparation of the Standard on efficacy evaluation of low-risk plant protection products. The EPPO Standard PP 1/296 *Principles of efficacy evaluation for low-risk plant protection products* is now available as an "early view" online version on Wiley Online Library <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/epp.12396/full> and will be published in the EPPO Bulletin in December 2017.

The "low-risk" Standard is important for minor uses as low-risk plant protection products will play an increasing role in filling minor uses gaps.

## Central European Regulation Forum

CEUREG is a technical conference for plant protection products regulation experts from Central and Eastern European Countries. The 21<sup>st</sup> event took place in Bratislava, Slovakia, from 24 to 25 October 2017. The MUCF, the EU Commission, Member States (Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland) as well as Serbia, the Ukraine and Russia attended the event.



This was another excellent opportunity for the MUCF to introduce the Facility, the organization of the work, as well as EUMUDA.

There was great interest from the Central and Eastern European countries in the MUCF and EUMUDA. Slovakia (and Serbia) indicated that facilitation of data sharing is a major issue. The MUCF will reinforce the collaboration with Central and European countries to help them solve their minor uses issues and increase their participation in the work at EU level.

More information on the event can be found here:  
<http://www.ceureg.com/>

## Second Stakeholder Advisory Forum of the MUCF: 6 February 2018

The Stakeholder Advisory Forum is organised annually by the MUCF to gather input from Member States governments, EU Commission, growers, the agri-food chain and industry on general minor uses issues.

Please note in your calendar that the Second Advisory Forum, will be held on 6 February 2018 in Brussels.

More information on the event will soon be available on the MUCF website.



*The MUCF is co-funded  
by the European Union*

