



Pesticide
Action
Network
Europe

WHICH COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY AFTER 2013 ?

PAN Europe position paper

March 2012

“We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking that created them.” Albert Einstein.

The challenge European agriculture is facing

... a reminder

The European model of agriculture is moving towards a increased level of standardization, both in terms of what we eat and what we produce in the field.

Monoculture means growing the same crop in the same fields year after year. It is widely used in industrial farming, because it allows large harvest, minimum labour and is considered the easiest to do. But monoculture has a number of drawbacks. Since all plants in monoculture are genetically similar, diseases spread faster. So monoculture requires more pesticide intensive cultivation. And other time beneficial organisms disappear, and intensifies biodiversity loss, so a really bad model to follow.

So while monoculture makes short-term economic sense for farmers, it is at the medium to long term detriment of the sustainability of their cropping systems. The monoculture is explicitly dominant in maize where 22% of all maize production produced in monoculture (Eurostat).

The EC's Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) has stressed in 3rd foresight report that: *'A radical change in food consumption and food production in Europe is unavoidable to meet the challenge of scarcities and to make the European agro-food system more resilient in times of increased instability and surprise'*.

Why this position paper ?

On 12th October 2011, the European Commission published its legislative proposals for a reform of the CAP after 2013. PAN Europe has actively contributed to the debate on the CAP towards 2020 (for an overview of papers distributed so far, please see www.pan-europe.info/agriculture). The purpose of this position paper is to highlight key points in the legislative proposals which we consider of special importance, explaining which proposals we support and those where much stronger measures are needed.





A CAP proposal able to reduce pesticide dependency

The way forward for the European model of agriculture is to ask each EU farmer to take a holistic approach to farming away from trying to eradicate all pest, diseases and weeds, and instead start to manage them effectively.

According to the SUD, all farmers need to apply integrated pest management (IPM) as from 1 January 2014. This means the farmer needs to apply a set of agronomic techniques aimed at preventing pests, diseases and weeds from building up to levels that cause economic damage to the crop. When prevention methods alone are insufficient, preference needs to be given to non-chemical alternatives, such as biological control of insect pests, physical trapping, mechanical weeding. Farmers need to start use synthetic pesticides only as a last resort and take care to select the least toxic products and to target and apply these in ways that minimise exposure of non-target wildlife and contamination.

Integrated weed management

Around 200 wild plant species are known to grow in Danish cultivated fields, yet 80% of these are very weak competitors with crops and will not affect yields substantially in a well-managed farm. Rather than making 'blanket' sprays of herbicides to keep fields totally weed-free, farmers can target the 20% of weeds which are problematic. Widening crop rotations to include different crop types can help prevent these weeds from spreading out of control.



Some agronomic practices which minimise the risk of significant yield losses due to insect pests and fungal diseases

- ⇒ Wide crop rotation avoids rapid build-up of pests (e.g. sugarbeet cultivated 1 in 3 years protects against nematode build-up; cabbage family crops 1 in 5 years keeps cabbage disease pathogen levels low)
- ⇒ Choice of crop varieties fully or partly resistant to pests
- ⇒ Avoid excessive fertilisation which results in plant sap highly attractive to sucking pests
- ⇒ Reduced sowing density of crops to lower humidity discourages fungal disease



What needs to change in the current CAP proposals ?

The CAP proposals as they stand will not be sufficiently strong to make sure that each farmer starts applying IPM as from 2014.

Cross compliance (SMRs):

PAN Europe welcomes the proposal to include Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD) into the rules that all farmers need to respect to obtain the basic CAP payment. Though these need to apply as from 1 January 2014, rather than from when 'the last Member State has notified the implementation of the Directive to the Commission, including the obligations relating to integrated pest management all farmers implement these directives' (article 93 of financial, managing and monitoring regulation).



Cross compliance (GAEC): It is unacceptable that the specific reference to crop rotation in Good Agricultural and Economic Practice (GAEC) has disappeared. This criteria needs to be reintroduced, to prevent the agricultural baselines already applied at national level from falling, to avoid green washing (Annex II of financial, managing and monitoring regulation).

Green component – the package approach: It is positive that the reform proposes to introduce the idea of a green component, with each EU farmer to deliver a simple package of agricultural practices, a combination of measures as a mandatory requirement to obtain the basic payment as from 2014. Such an approach will help to ensure that farming gets back to take a more preventive approach (article 29 of direct payment regulation).

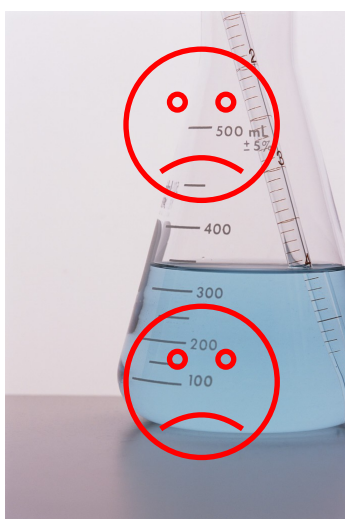


Green component – must include crop rotation: The proposed element of crop diversification with maximum 70% of one crop and minimum three crops is inadequate. It must be upgraded to a requirement of maximum 50% of one crop in a rotational system. It is important to highlight in the reform proposal that diversification should require cultivating crops from different plant families. Also it is important to add an element of cover cropping to avoid bare soil in the future (article 30 of the direct payment regulation).

The package approach which could have made a change

The principle must be that each farmer from 2014 will be asked to deliver a package of sustainable practices consisting of: something **within** the field (crop rotation); something **around** the field (e.g. buffer zones to protect water, floral strips to attract pollinators, hedges), something in summer; and something in winter (e.g. catch crops).

Rural Development - EIP: It is positive that the reform proposal establishes a European Innovative Partnership on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP) and as part of this put emphasis on transmission of knowledge to farmers delivered as a bottom up approach at local level. However, this approach will only make sense if applied as local solutions for local problems, as an important step to encourage the necessary agro-ecological approach in the future giving a strong focus on the importance of new actors in the food chain (article 61 of Rural Development Regulation).



Rural Development – compensation natural disasters: PAN Europe’s position is that no public funding under these schemes should be paid to farmers who cannot demonstrate that they have taken a preventative agronomic approach to natural disasters, starting with crop rotation (article 37, 38, 39 of Rural Development Regulation).

Rural Development – investment scheme: the investment scheme needs to offer specific support to non-chemical methods, like bio-control agents (e.g. beneficial insects, mites, nematodes), bio-pesticides, insect pest pheromones and various substances of natural origin e.g. natural plant resistance inducers, to compensate farmers for the potentially higher price of using these (article 18 of Rural Development Regulation).

The main pros and cons of implementing crop rotations at the farm level :

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve or maintain soil fertility • Limiting erosion • Reducing the build up of pests • Spreading the workload on time • Mitigating risk of weather changes • Limiting dependence on agricultural chemicals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring knowledge on building a crop rotation • Requiring performing farm practices and knowledge on a range of crops • Impacts variable according to farming practices, crops and local conditions • Risk related to crop change and management of a new crop • Decreasing profitability during the implementation

Source: (Environmental impacts of crop rotation in the EU, European Commission DG ENVI, page 38, 2010)

This leaflet was edited and published by PAN Europe using Microsoft © Office Publisher 2007. For further information: Henriette Christensen, senior policy advisor, PAN Europe Brussels office tel: + 32 2 503 08 37; email: henriette@pan-europe.info .

Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe) was founded in 1987 and brings together consumer, public health, and environmental organisations, trades unions, women’s groups and farmer associations from across 19 European countries. PAN Europe is part of the global network PAN working to minimise the negative effects and replace the use of harmful pesticides with ecologically sound alternatives.