

***Introducing the background and reason for this workshop from the PAN point of view***

Carina Weber, Executive Director PAN Germany, Chair PAN Europe Board

Pesticides are an important issue as they are released into the environment deliberately. They are one specific tool for agricultural production and they are toxic. Therefore it goes without saying that their use is being questioned. Especially from the environmental, consumer and also from the agricultural workers point of view there is a strong need for alternatives. And there are strong indications that pesticide use reduction can save money at the farm as well as nationally and internationally. The aim of this workshop is to have an exchange of views on options for pesticide reduction and to identify elements for successful pesticide use reduction programmes.

I am pleased that we can welcome representatives from important stakeholders: from the governmental side, the farmers side, the food companies side as well as – and this is the largest group - the NGO side.

And I want to say “thank you” to those, who financially supported this workshop:

- the Anglo German Foundation;
- the European Commission and the Rausing Trust;
- and also the German Federal Environmental Agency (the UBA).

We meet here to discuss Pesticide Use Reduction Initiatives. And this workshop will have at least a small but real effect regarding pesticide use reduction: The food we will consume today has been produced organically.

And now some words about the question “Why this workshop”. PAN, the Pesticide Action Network, is a network of over 600 participating non-governmental organizations, institutions and individuals in over 90 countries. PAN works to replace the use of hazardous pesticides with ecologically sound alternatives. Therefore, pesticide use reduction has always been and still is a key issue for PAN all over the world.

However, the approaches to achieve pesticide use reduction are quite different in the different regions and countries, as the social, economic and political conditions are quite diverse. On the European level the first initiatives for a pesticide use reduction started already at the very beginning of the 1990s. At national level this happened even earlier, as will be reported today. Right from the start PAN intently watched these developments. And already from the very beginning PAN used quite different means to support the development of pesticide use reduction programmes on European as well as on national level. Catherine Wattiez will report on the diversity of activities from the PAN Europe point of view.

In Brussels as well as in the European countries the discussion was mostly quite vague or dominated by defensive battles. The best example of a constructive and positive approach is probably from Denmark (PAN Europe has just published a pamphlet on the Danish reduction programme). But step by step more farmers, food companies and governments started thinking, and also working towards concrete

action on pesticide use reduction. In this situation we thought that it might be the right time to have a look at promising initiatives towards pesticide use reduction and discuss some of the challenges and lessons in a small group of supportive colleagues from NGOs, public and private sectors.

Bearing in mind that PAN's aim is to avoid the use of pesticides as much as possible, the intention of this workshop is to have a closer look at those initiatives which go ahead, which took steps most of the others didn't take up till now and which have been successful in reducing the use of pesticides.

And we organised this workshop to enable a discussion about the question whether the "success stories" available are transferable – transferable within countries as well as via national borders.

**Stephanie Williamson, PAN UK, PAN Europe Board Member**

Wearing my PAN UK hat on, I'd like to give a few words of explanation on why we have no government speaker from the British side. It's been quite interesting over the last 2 or 3 years to compare how the British and German governments have each been developing national strategies on pesticide reduction but I have to confess that the Germans have clearly overtaken us and are now racing ahead in terms of use reduction! The British government has been proposing and consulting for at least 2 years on what our national strategy should cover but it looks extremely vague. We did invite both the UK Food Standards Agency who have been talking about a residue minimisation strategy, and our regulatory agency, the Pesticides Safety Directorate, to speak at this workshop but neither were able to accept. So instead, my colleague Clare Butler-Ellis will have a longer slot to tell us about the various processes and initiatives in Britain and how far they have progressed or not in the last couple of years, as well as our assessment of the situation from PAN UK's perspective.

And wearing my PAN Europe board member hat, I'd also remind everyone of the diversity of agricultural and political situations in the enlarged Europe and what this might mean for pesticide use reduction strategies. I'm very pleased to have a good participation of NGOs from Eastern and Mediterranean Europe today, this is really important for us as historically PAN Europe has been dominated by northern and western countries. One example of how we need to think Europe-wide is our PURE campaign which includes a target for 50% reduction in pesticide use within 10 years. What does this mean for Central and Eastern European countries where economic conditions over the last decade have resulted in far lower pesticide consumption figures in terms of kg per hectare than in intensive farming in Western Europe? But we also know that this average hides important differences between many thousands of small-scale farmers whose use of pesticides is very limited, while a few large-scale farms are rapidly increasing their use.

A further issue is the way that our food is sourced and distributed across Europe – most of us are aware of the concerns about high and frequent use of very hazardous insecticides in Spanish vegetables, for example, which are often picked up in residue

monitoring. But I recently found out that Poland is now the largest producer of tomato in Europe- so what will this mean for pesticide use in those cropping systems? So finally, I hope we can generate some good discussion on what kind of strategies we need to promote effective pesticide reduction programmes in our various countries and support the millions of farmers operating in very different agro-ecological, economic and food chain contexts to change to safer and more sustainable pest management.