

Feeding Europe with Less Pesticides A Consumer Co-operative's Standpoint



European Community of Consumer Co-operatives

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Overview of Euro Coop



General Facts

- ✓ European association of **consumer co-operatives**
- ✓ Members: national consumer co-operative organizations in **19 countries**
- ✓ Members' main activity: **retail**

General Numbers

- ✓ **5,000** local consumer co-operatives
- ✓ **500,000** employees
- ✓ **36,000** points of sale
- ✓ **32 million** consumer- members
- ✓ **> € 76 billion** annual retail turnover



Main goals



- ✓ Represent the members before the EU Institutions
- ✓ Exchange of experiences, best practices, Know-how
- ✓ Providing information on key policy issues



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The Co-operative Difference (I)



Different entrepreneurial
model based on
values and principles

VALUES →

The **co-operative**

Our co-operative values

SELF-HELP

We help people to help themselves.

SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

We take responsibility for, and answer to our actions.

DEMOCRACY

We give our members a say in the way we run our businesses.

EQUALITY

No matter how much money a member invests in their share account, they still have one vote.

EQUITY

We carry our business in a way that is fair and unbiased.

SOLIDARITY

We share interests and common purposes with our members and other co-operatives.

The **co-operative**
good for everyone



The Co-operative Difference (II)

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PRINCIPLES:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Co-operation among Co-operatives
7. Concern for Community

THE 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

The relation co-operative-sustainability

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✓ Because of their specific entrepreneurial form based on values and principles co-operatives are generally considered as **inherently sustainable businesses**



✓ The concept of **sustainability** is rooted in the one of **sustainable development**, which we intend as indicated by the **United Nations**

"A mode of human development in which resource use aims to meet human needs while ensuring the sustainability of natural systems and the environment, so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for generations to come"

(Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development."
United Nations General Assembly Resolution 42/187, 11 December 1987)

Pesticides – What do we stand for?



- ✓ **Minimise hazards/risks to health & environment from pesticides use**
- ✓ **Improve controls on pesticides use/distribution**
- ✓ **Reduce the levels of harmful active substances, in particular by replacing the most dangerous (including non-chemical) alternatives**
- ✓ **Encourage the use of low-input or pesticide-free crop farming**
- ✓ **Establish a transparent system for reporting/monitoring progress, including development of appropriate indicators**
- ✓ **Streamline/co-ordinate policies (agriculture, environment, food safety etc.)**



Why reducing pesticides makes business sense?

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- ✓ To give consumer **opportunity for a responsible choice**
- ✓ **Reputation:** To protect **private labels** and goodwill
- ✓ To maintain role as a **first mover** in the market
- ✓ For co-operatives, business must in any case go hand in hand with **environmental & consumer protection**



When to implement a ban/requirement?

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- ✓ Possibility for safe substitution exists
- ✓ Legislation is imprecise (or too slow)
- ✓ Early warnings are solid and use of precautionary principle is relevant
- ✓ Consumer organisations, public authorities, NGOs raise legitimate concerns



How to reduce pesticide dependency?



- ✓ Keeping on being frontrunners in promoting organic products
- ✓ Developing and « pushing » own-brand lines for organic/ecological products (Änglamark, Vivi Verde etc.)
- ✓ Being responsible for controls throughout the supply chain beyond legislative obligations (implementation of « Code of Practices »)
- ✓ Educating /informing employees/consumer-members to the impact of pesticides in food production
- ✓ Fostering dialogue consumer organisations, public authorities, NGOs
- ✓ Applying the precautionary principle
- ✓ Carrying out a thorough risk assessment

Pesticides: best practices (I)



The Co-operative Group UK

- ✓ Strong policy to reduce use of pesticides in all own-brand fresh, frozen, chilled and canned product
- ✓ 449 pesticides in Pesticide Policy as banned, prohibited, monitored. Policy reviewed according to international conventions . E.g. phasing out alachlor, adicarb, endusolfan
- ✓ Require all growers to fully explore alternative pest management approaches. Regular compliance auditing across the supply chain. When breached: sourcing suspended
- ✓ In 2009: first UK supermarket to ban the use of neonicotinoids implicated in billions of honeybee deaths worldwide



Pesticides: best practices (II)



Coop Denmark

- ✓ Leaders in mainstreaming and promoting organic products
- ✓ 2006: Ban of the most harmful (but legal) pesticides
- ✓ 2008: Only allowed to sell “ready-to-use” pesticides
- ✓ 2013: Last season Coop bought pesticides
- ✓ 2014: Total ban. 10.000 bottles was destroyed. Press release. Very good response from NGOs, customers and authorities



Pesticides: best practices (III)

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Coop Italy

- ✓ Since 1992: limits not only residues from single substances but from **cumulated substances** → if more substances are contemporary allowed, residues from single substances must decrease
- ✓ **Precautionary principle embedded in all its policies** → ongoing scientific monitoring and contribution, rigorous controls on the whole supply chain
- ✓ Ensures that all **own-brand products as well as feed for animals used to produce its own-brands are GM-free**
- ✓ Pioneers in Italy to mainstream and promote **organic products**



Coop Sweden, Coop Norway

- ✓ Leaders in mainstreaming and promoting **organic products**

Thank you for your attention!

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