



RAISING

HEAL & MDRGF: Cartoon chemicals are harming

On 1 December 2008 in Brussels HEAL together with MDRGF launched the Choosing our Future comic strip, a humorous warning of the harm to health of certain chemicals widely used in the environment.

Produced jointly by HEAL's Chemicals Health Monitor project and Mouvement pour les Droits et le Respect des Générations Futures (MDRGF) and available in English and French the publication and associated website aim to inform readers of what is known about the links between health and man-made chemicals. It also gives examples of individual 'cock



Choosing our Future can be downloaded

PAN Europe: News from the Network

strengthen one another in regard to their impact on Health

INVEST AND R

Global 2000 warns

In May, Global 2000 published an investigation into the impact of new EU legislation on food standards. The study compared Austria's national Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) with the new 'harmonized' EU MRLs set to replace them on 1 September 2008. Whilst 4% of MRLs will become stricter under the new legislation, 65% will be relaxed – in some cases by up to 1000-fold of the current legal maximum.

"Food products showing illegally high levels of pesticide



PAN Europe: News from the Network

ANNUAL REPORT 2008



including Stories of Success from PAN Europe network members

ON

pesticides toxic to bees

treat- ing ic to oprid mid- ORS yl-M, S (thi- mid, ppid, thio- iani- But, onth ur of d to- stat- ed PAN hers sign epr- of due art-

- At an EU level - Withdrawal of the approval for all active substances that are considered to be toxic to bees;
- An improvement to the guidelines for testing bee toxicity as part of the assessment for pesticide approval;
- A ban on cultivating sweetcorn in mono culture; and
- Support of organic agriculture.

Germany is not alone in this disaster. The collapse of bee colonies is a phenomenon known all over the world. Only this spring similar disasters were reported in Italy and Slovenia.



Left, Manfred Heister, German bee keepers, PAN Germany; Hubert Weiger, BUND.

Taking Action

pesticide costs,

Workshop panel discussion with Ricardo Gutierrez, FLO, Ken Hayes, Soil Association, Alexandra Perschau, PAN Germany and Marion Bulley.

Network

ACTS

ore, Food and workshops



was aimed at NGOs and public and private donors and was entitled 'Using diversity to reduce dependency on cotton and combat poverty'. The second workshop on 25 September, also in Hamburg, was addressed to businesses and was entitled, 'Corporate Social Responsibility in a development context: Using diversity to reduce dependency on cotton and combat poverty'.



Global Impacts

NOS ENFANTS NOUS ACCUSERONT

UN FILM DE JEAN-PIERRE LUC



es légumes

es légumes

es légumes



Our Mission

PAN Europe is a network of grass roots organisations working to replace the use of hazardous pesticides with ecologically sound alternatives.

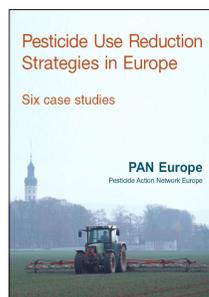
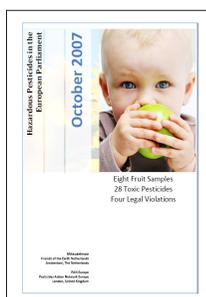
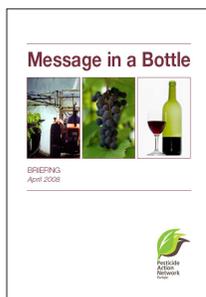
Our vision is of a world where high agricultural productivity is achieved through sustainable farming systems in which agrochemical inputs and environmental impacts are minimised, and where local communities control food production using local varieties.

PAN Europe brings together consumer, health and environmental organisations, trades unions, women's groups and farmer associations. Our formal membership includes 32 organisations based in 19 European countries.

Our Work

PAN Europe:

- Builds collaborative partnerships among organisations working towards common goals and provides a forum for exchange and cooperation
- Provides a focal point for EU advocacy by engaging network members in participating in the European political process while acting as a single unifying voice in Brussels
- Reaches across national boundaries in confronting the root causes of hazardous pesticide exposure
- Campaigns to raise wider awareness of the issues our members are working to resolve locally



Our Members

PAN Europe has network members in Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, UK, and Ukraine



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Message from the Chair

A SUCCESSFUL YEAR

For PAN Europe, 2008 was an important year. Six years previously, we had launched a proposed Directive for Pesticide Use Reduction in Europe (PURE), and in 2008 PAN Europe, together with its member organisations and other allies, fought for a strong Framework Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides and a similarly strong Regulation for the Authorisation of Pesticides. We achieved solid results on improving protection for European citizens and the environment, for instance by defending the Regulation's cut-off criteria. This success reflects PAN Europe's strong representation in Brussels, where we are recognised among EU institutions as a key stakeholder. PAN Europe's success in Brussels is also based on its close cooperation with member groups, which work at national level, specifically targeting their country's representatives in the European Parliament.

But PAN Europe is more than just a Brussels-centred operation. It is a network of diverse people and organisations across the European Union and beyond which deploys a wide range of tools to tackle the harm chemical pesticides do to our health and the environment, and promotes sustainable alternatives. Our joint activities with our member organisations give a clear picture of a vibrant network. These qualities will stand us in good stead in finalising the legal status of both the Directive and the Regulation. But PAN Europe's strengths will be in even greater demand in future years, for example by ensuring that the Directive is translated from the paper it is written on into real changes in how European agriculture operates.

Finally, to give you a greater flavour of PAN Europe's activities in Europe, we have included some success stories from PAN Europe members as an appendix to this report.



Alexandra Perschau

Chair, Pesticide Action Network Europe

Network News

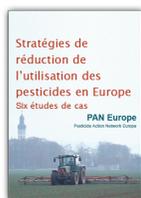
THREE NEW MEMBERS

We welcomed three new members in 2008: the Polish Ecological Club (Poland's Friends of the Earth affiliate); ECHO (Environment, Cultural Understanding, Health) from Slovenia, and Global 2000, in Austria (another national Friends of the Earth affiliate). This brings our network membership to 33 members from 19 countries. PAN Europe now has members in 15 of the 27 EU Member States and in four other countries in the Balkans and regions further to the east.

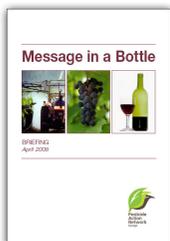


NEW MATERIALS

In 2008, we developed a new logo and a new website and displayed colour images in our newsletter for the first time, to show how our members are taking action in their own countries on activities ranging from street protests to seminars with policy-makers. In response to requests from members for translations of PAN Europe's reports and briefings, we made several publications available in Bulgarian, Slovenian, French and Slovakian so that members can use them more effectively at national level, and translated into English our Armenian member's manual on non-chemical pest management for family farmers.



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE



Working with members in France, Germany and Austria, our groundbreaking report on pesticide residues in wine caused an international stir, when residues were shown to be present in all conventional wines sampled, with an average of four different pesticides detected in each bottle. Our *Message in a Bottle* report achieved major coverage in newspapers which included USA Today, the International Herald Tribune, Libération, Bild, Die Welt, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Der Spiegel, Kleine Zeitung, the Daily Mail and Daily Telegraph, and in radio and television broadcasts in Austria, France, South Africa and the UK.

WEEK WITHOUT PESTICIDES

Further network members took part in *Semaine sans Pesticides* in March 2008 (pioneered as an annual campaigning focus by our French member Generations Futures since 2006), making this a truly European 'Week without Pesticides', with events also taking place in Austria, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, and the UK. For example, our member, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, celebrated the week by launching a report highlighting the over-use of fungicides in potato production in Sweden.



MEDIA SUCCESS

Through closer coordination, PAN Europe successfully worked with members to achieve higher media visibility nationally for our Brussels-level actions, such as our legal challenge with Dutch member Natuur & Milieu to European Commission legislation which permits substantial increases in pesticide residues allowed in food. News of the legal challenge was carried by media across the EU, and our members gave interviews to their national press in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Chemicals activities

CO-DECISION ON PESTICIDES REGULATION

The year 2008 was busy for PAN Europe because it was when the co-decision procedure was set to reach its final outcome following protracted discussion. The Commission's original 2006 proposal for the new Regulation on plant protection products was heavily amended by the European Parliament's Environmental Committee and its rapporteur, Hiltrud Breyer, a German Green MEP. The main discussion focused on the 'cut-off' criteria on health and the environment, used as a minimum requirement for all pesticides to obtain EU approval. The Commission's proposal already included cut-off criteria, which Parliament made much stricter on issues including mutagenicity, developmental neurotoxicity, endocrine disruption, and bees. The chemicals industry lobbied hard, claiming that 85% of all pesticides would disappear from the market if the Breyer proposal were accepted. Industry strongly benefitted from MEPs from the UK, Ireland and some eastern European countries. The UK's Pesticides Safety Directorate was responsible for producing the calculation which envisaged banning 85% of pesticides. However, calculations carried out by the European Commission indicated that just 5-8% of all pesticides would disappear. PAN Europe believes this exaggeration was engineered to sow panic in Brussels. It certainly scared farmers, who suddenly began lobbying on this issue for the first time in years. However in Brussels it was regarded as a distortion of the facts and indeed helped PAN's lobbying. PAN Europe was active at every level, contacting the Commission, Parliament, Council and the media. Our members also lobbied nationally. Several of them were also involved in testing pesticides residues.

PAN Europe provided Parliament, and especially the rapporteur, with ideas on how to find compromises on the Regulation's final text. Parliament wanted to retain as many of their amendments as possible, while the Council was reluctant to take too many new provisions on board. The Commission steered a course between the two and succeeded in getting most of what it sought. The Commission's Directorate General for Health & Consumers (DG SANCO), the leading department, insisted on retaining the cut-offs, thanks to its new Commissioner, Androulla Vassiliou. In late 2008 a compromise was reached which PAN Europe applauded, though several parliamentary amendments were diluted and some compromises were rather complicated and needed guidance on implementation. When compared to the old Directive, which provided no criteria, it was an important step forward.

PAN Europe received substantial media coverage, reacting each time a new meeting was held and decisions taken. PAN also held special hearings in Parliament to focus on key topics. Many MEPs, especially Erna Hennicot-Schoepges from Luxembourg, were interested in the effects of pesticides on cancers. This persuaded them to back a strict Regulation. PAN Europe also tried to raise the case's profile by testing pesticides residues. The early 2008 campaign on wine (the 'message in a bottle' report) was extremely successful and elicited hundreds of media articles worldwide. Another campaign in autumn 2008, on grapes, also attracted substantial media attention.

PAN Europe members attempted to convince their national ministries to support a strong Council position and lobby national MEPs.

Supermarket project

PAN Europe launched its supermarket project in 2008. The programme ends in mid-2010. The project's goal is to work with PAN members across Europe to initiate, coordinate, support and partly fund the establishment of national supermarket testing programmes. Our aim is to obtain substantial media coverage at national and EU level, on the presence of pesticides in the EU food chain leading with the aim of raising public awareness of the issue. We hope that our projects will result in many supermarkets adopting a greater focus on pesticide residues in the formulation and implementation of food-sourcing policy. We encourage supermarkets to adopt food-sourcing policies which exceed EU legal requirements.

In our first round of testing in autumn 2008, we tested 124 grape samples from leading supermarkets and wholesalers in France, Germany, Hungary, Italy and the Netherlands. Analysis of grapes purchased from 18 major food retailers revealed widespread contamination by illegal, unauthorised and unsafe pesticides. Six of the grape samples (4.8%) contained pesticides at concentrations above EU maximum legal limits. Ninety-nine percent of grapes tested were affected, and an average of 6.5 different pesticides was detected in each sample. Twenty percent of grapes contained ten or more pesticides. One third of samples were classified as 'not recommended' for consumers owing to critical pesticide residue levels. Pesticides included in the Greenpeace 'Pesticide Blacklist' were found in 115 grape samples (92.7%). These pesticides have particularly hazardous properties including links with cancer, infertility, nerve damage, disruptions to the hormonal system or mutagenic effects. Only one sample of grapes, sold by Lidl in Germany, was awarded 'recommended' (green) status under the same assessment criteria.

Media coverage in response to our press release was encouraging. We also published a background paper. Our partners in France and Italy have subsequently been in contact and held meetings with supermarkets involved in the study to begin discussing the reduction of pesticide use in their supply chains.



Success Stories from PAN Europe Members

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Introduction

This compilation of articles first published in PAN Europe's quarterly newsletter documents some of the many recent successes of European NGOs working to address the negative health and environmental impacts of pesticides.

Through political advocacy, media work, grass roots initiatives, conferences, workshops, investigative research, and by building partnerships with farmers and supermarkets, a growing number of organisations across Europe are now active in promoting pesticide use reduction and decreased over-reliance on synthetic inputs in agriculture.

The breadth and diversity of success stories set out below pays tribute to the industry and innovation of those individuals and organisations involved, as well as the urgency of engaging a broad range of stakeholders in taking action on the issue.

While politicians both in Brussels and beyond remain slow to agree the kinds of genuine agricultural reforms needed to halt the ongoing contamination of our food, air, water resources and soils, NGOs across Europe continue step by step towards the delivery of pesticide use reduction and the elimination of exposure to hazardous pesticides.

Rachel Sutton

Coordinator



INVESTIGATION AND RESEARCH

Global 2000 warns of rising pesticide levels in food

In May, Global 2000 published an investigation into the impact of new EU legislation on food standards. The study compared Austria's national Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) with the new 'harmonized' EU MRLs set to replace them on 1 September 2008. Whilst 4% of MRLs will become stricter under the new legislation, 65% will be relaxed – in some cases by up to 1000-fold of the current legal maximum.

"Food products showing illegally high levels of



pesticide contamination today could legally enter the food chain after 1 September", said Global 2000 biochemist Helmut Burtscher.

Scrutiny of the 'harmonized' EU MRLs found shocking results. The MRL for fungicide propamocarb in pears, for example, will rise by a factor of 100 in September to stand at 10 mg/kg. But according to EU risk assessment models, at just 11 mg/kg propamocarb could pose a threat to children's health. "Since in this case there is almost no buffer between the legal and the health-endangering pesticide dose, setting such an MRL is a completely irresponsible act of the European Commission" Burtscher explains.

In addition the new MRLs take no account of the cumulative risks that pesticides pose. Food monitoring programmes commonly reveal a cocktail of pesticides which can mutually affect and strengthen one another in



regard to their impact on human health. However, in establishing these new MRLs, this cumulative risk has been completely ignored with the (weak) pretence that still no suitable models for cumulative risk assessment could be identified.

"All in all the forthcoming MRL legislation represents a serious health risk to European consumers. A detailed assessment of the new MRLs should be undertaken by national health authorities with the aim of eliminating at least those MRLs that pose a clear risk to consumers' health. Alternatively – if MRLs like that for propamocarb in pears come into force – food items should be labelled, saying: "The EU-Secretaries for Health: Consumption of Fruit and Vegetables Endangers Health" said Burtscher.

Legambiente: Pesticides on a Plate

In Italy, fruit is the category of food worst affected by pesticide residues. This was the major finding of 'Pesticidi nel Piatto' (Pesticides on a Plate) – the 10th annual food monitoring report of Legambiente, published 23 May. Apples rank among Italy's most contaminated foods with three quarters showing pesticide residues, while one sample of white grapes contained nine different pesticides. Eleven samples of citrus fruits imported from Spain were also found to contain high

numbers of pesticide residues. Published in Florence at the 'Terrafutura' conference on sustainable living, 'Pesticidi nel Piatto' was this year presented in association with UNAAPI – the main national organization of Italian beekeepers. UNAAPI welcomed the report and urged for greater protection for Europe's pollinators, and for the withdrawal of pesticides toxic to bees.

Legambiente's analysis of Italy's national food supply chain is based on data published by state monitoring

agencies and combines data relating to 10,048 different food samples. In total 45.8% of fruit samples tested were found to contain pesticides, while 1% exceeded legal limits on pesticide levels. By comparison vegetables showed far lower levels of contamination: 14.7% contained pesticide residues while 0.7% breached legal limits.



LEGAMBIENTE

SSNC gets tough on potatoes

The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) celebrated Europe's 'Week Without Pesticides' in March by highlighting the over use of fungicides in potato farming.

While the potato is a highly nutritious food commodity, Europe's potatoes receive a higher dose of synthetic fungicides than any other major crop. In Sweden the problem is particularly acute: potatoes account for just 1% of Swedish farmland, but receive 40% of all fungicides. And despite having an ideal climate for the cultivation of organic potatoes, only 2% of Sweden's potatoes are certified as organic. On 19

March SSNC published 'Potatis och Bekämpningsmedel' ('Potatoes and Pesticides') a new report documenting the impact of pesticides applied to potatoes, together with a consumer-friendly information pamphlet. News of the study was reported on national television as well as by local newspapers.

SSNC will now use the report to inform discussions on Sweden's National Action Plan on pesticides to be finalised later this year. SSNC's work in targeting potatoes is the latest development in the NGO's strategy of naming and shaming the 'bad guys' of Swedish agriculture, and

follows earlier reports such as

- 'Strawberries and pesticides'
- 'Tomatoes and climate change'
- 'Meat, climate change and eutrophication'.



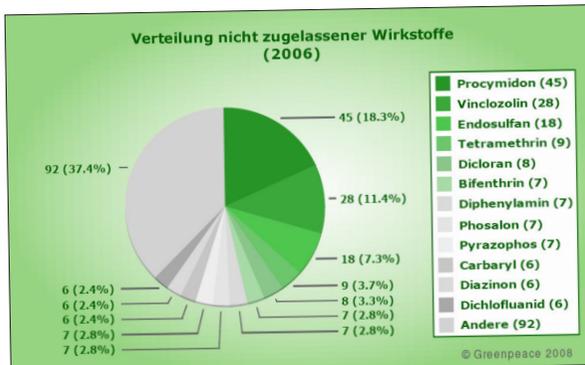
Greenpeace Germany: 1 in 10 contaminated foods contains unauthorized pesticides

Analysis of German food produce contaminated with pesticides shows that 1 in 10 affected items contains unauthorized substances. This finding was published by

Greenpeace Germany on 21 August and was based on data provided by Germany's national federal office for consumer protection and food security.

Of 6,750 contaminated food items detailed in Germany's 2006 national food monitoring reports, some 2,176 products were of German origin. Residues of pesticides not authorised for use in Germany were found in 199 of these items – which equates to 9.1 % of the contaminated German foods listed.

In total, residues of 59 unauthorised substances were present in 39 different kinds of food. Foods worst affected included fresh herbs, potatoes and raspberries. Residues exceeded the legally permitted limits in 11 cases. In another six cases the acute reference dose for children aged two to under five was breached.



Distribution of unauthorised substances: in total residues of 59 unauthorised substances were detected in German food samples. Procymidone, vinclozolin and endosulfan were the most common.

HEAL: New report on breast cancer urges MEPs to cut back on pesticides

Around 1 in 10 women in Europe will develop breast cancer at some point in their lives. Reducing this figure cannot be achieved without decreasing exposure to certain chemicals, including pesticides, according to a report launched by the Health & Environment Alliance (HEAL) and CHEM Trust during a lunchtime event held in the European Parliament on 2 April.

The report entitled: "Breast cancer and exposure to hormonally active chemicals: An appraisal of the scientific evidence" was written by a leading EU researcher on endocrine disrupters, Professor Andreas Kortenkamp, Head of the Centre for Toxicology at the School of Pharmacy, University of London. This scientific review focuses on the role of hormone

disrupting chemicals, with particular reference to early life and multiple chemical exposures.

Professor Kortenkamp concluded his presentation of the new report by emphasizing that "we will not be able to reduce the risk of breast cancer without addressing preventable causes, particularly exposure to chemicals." European

Parliamentarians also heard from two other prominent European experts: Dr Annie J. Sasco from the Bordeaux University and Dr Nicolas Olea from the University of Granada. Hosted by MEP Avril Doyle, the event attracted cross-party attendance from Members of European Parliament (MEPs), including MEPs Against Cancer and the European Parliamentary Group on Breast Cancer, as well as representatives from the European Commission – DG Environment and from Europa Donna, the European breast cancer coalition.

The report's message that tougher controls are needed on man-made chemicals resonated across the European media, with extensive coverage in Euronews and several national television stations, the largest German public radio Deutschlandfunk (DLF) and articles in the Guardian on-line, Le Monde, Euroactiv and the British Medical Journal among others.

Lisette van Vliet, HEAL Toxics Policy Advisor, encouraged Parliamentarians to act on the scientific recommendations and listed some urgent areas to reduce chemicals' contribution to the breast cancer incidence rate. For the EU pesticides policy reform, van Vliet recommended that MEPs should keep the strong amendments adopted by the Parliament on the so-called 'cut-off criteria' for

carcinogens, mutagens and reproductive toxins (CMR) and hormone disrupting pesticides. MEPs also had an opportunity to ensure that the cut-off criteria make specific reference to eliminating exposure to pesticide residues in food products. Just days after the meeting, the European Parliament passed a resolution on combating cancer with an overwhelming majority of MEPs agreeing to amendments that highlight the need to reduce carcinogens and other chemicals. This acknowledgement that curbing environmental pollution, including pesticide use, must be considered in any future strategy to combat cancer, is a victory for health advocates and environmental activists alike.

As part of its breast cancer and chemicals work, HEAL and CHEM Trust also launched the following educational and advocacy resources available in several EU languages:

- 'Factors influencing the risk of breast cancer – established and emerging' (a briefing for the public);
- 'Breast Cancer: Preventing the preventable' (a leaflet for women and breast cancer sufferers);
- Breast cancer portfolio of peer-reviewed and published papers.

All publications are downloadable on the Chemicals Health Monitor project website: www.chemicalshealthmonitor.org and available in hard copy upon request.



Irish Parliamentarian Avril Doyle (Conservative) urging MEPs to use the EU pesticide reform to remove and replace hormone disrupting pesticides with less harmful alternatives

WECF: European Parliament must protect children's brains

On 8 October 2008, Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) organised an expert meeting at the European Parliament to highlight the latest scientific evidence on the connection between children's health problems and chemicals found in children's food and products. The meeting was hosted by Dorette Corbey MEP, a member of the Committee on Environment, Public Health, and Food safety, and was attended by MEPs, European Commission representatives and NGOs. The meeting was held as MEPs were preparing to vote on revisions to the Pesticide Directive, the Cosmetics Directive and the Toys Safety Directive.

Current chemicals legislation does not require testing on neurotoxins. WECF informed attendees that European children were at risk of damage to their brains and reproductive organs through



Dorette Corbey MEP, speaking at the WECF event in October

exposure to hazardous chemicals if the European Parliament did not improve on proposed legislation relating to pesticides, toys, cosmetics and chemicals.

Sascha Gabizon, Executive Director of WECF said that for parents it is "unacceptable to have to wait many years until the European Commission has agreed to require neurotoxicity testing, whereas all children born today are at risk of having retarded brain development or later in life cancers, from contaminants their mothers are not even aware of they are being exposed to and passing on to the child in their womb. We want that European Parliamentarians take their responsibility and protect our children now, by making sure neurotoxins and endocrine disruptors are not allowed to be in children's food, toys and body care products".

Professor Philippe Grandjean, adjunct professor of Environmental Health at Harvard University and expert on children's environmental health, spoke at the meeting. He stated that what "we are seeing is a world-wide pandemic, the child population in the world is affected by over 200 neurotoxins in their direct environment, many of them



WECF report of the meeting, *A Safe Environment for Children*

being pesticides. Perhaps as many as one out of six children's brain development have been adversely affected, in part by neurotoxins, as a scientific report in the Lancet already showed in November 2006. Testing for neurotoxins is a necessity, in pesticides as well as in other consumer products."

Dorette Corbey concluded the meeting by asking the European Commission to include testing of neurotoxins as part of the chemicals legislation and for appropriate testing methods to be developed. She stated the use of pesticides should be subject to clear rules, which are currently being laid out in European legislation.

CEPTA uncovers rising pesticide use in Slovakia

Slovakia's dependence on pesticides has been steadily increasing over recent years according to government data recently obtained by CEPTA. Making use of a Slovakian law based on the Aarhus Convention, Daniel Lesinsky from CEPTA was able to apply to the government body responsible for pesticide use and authorization, the Central Controlling and Testing Institute for Agriculture in Bratislava, for the figures relating to pesticide use in the country since 2003.

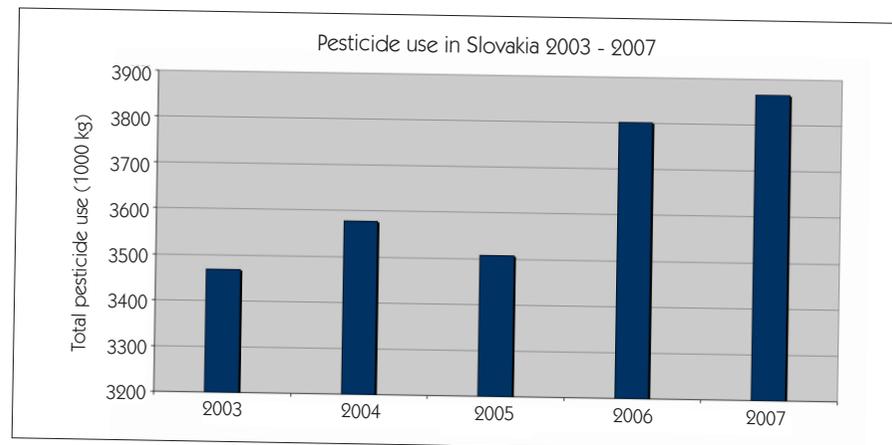
The data shows pesticide usage has risen significantly since 2003. Overall pesticide use has increased by 12% between 2003 and 2007. In particular the application of fungicides and bactericides has gone up: rising from just over 570 000kg in 2003 to 760 000kg in 2007, an

increase of 33%. While both insecticide and herbicide use has gradually increased, the most dramatic change was seen in insecticide seed treatments which rose by a staggering 200% (5 614kg – 17 001kg) over the five reported years. The only pesticide category to show a decrease up to 2007 was fungicide seed treatments, the use of which has gradually decreased to nearly half the quantity used in 2003.

Although in Slovakia all commercial pesticide users are obliged by law to report their annual pesticide usage the Department of Plant Protection, who supplied the data, warned CEPTA it could only be counted as 70% accurate as not all farmers comply with the reporting requirement. Daniel Lesinsky advises organizations or individuals seeking similar



data from their own government to set out the information they require in a letter and to be aware of the data's quality and range, 'if you are analysing the data from your country be aware of how the data is collected and calculated, the area it covers, from how many farmers/arable areas it comes from and if all pesticide categories are included. Ask for an effective, transparent and on-time monitoring and reporting information system to be implemented in your country'.



RAISING AWARENESS

HEAL & MDRGF: Cartoon comic strips highlight how chemicals are harming our health

On 1 December 2008 in Brussels HEAL together with MDRGF launched the Choosing our Future comic strip, a humorous warning of the harm to health of certain chemicals widely used in the environment.

Produced jointly by HEAL's Chemicals Health Monitor project and Mouvement pour les Droits et le Respect des Générations Futures (MDRGF) and available in English and French the publication and associated website aim to inform readers of what is known about the links between health and man-made chemicals. It also gives examples of individual

actions and EU policy opportunities that can help produce changes for the better.

There are four comic strip stories each using novel and entertaining characters to touch on health conditions which may be associated with man-made chemicals in the environment including allergies, asthma, brain development disturbances, cancers, and fertility problems. They cover the special vulnerabilities of unborn babies and children; how synthetic substances are building up in our bodies; and how exposure to a mixture of chemicals known

as the "cocktail effect" may be multiplying the adverse effects of exposure, while the final story suggests some alternatives that can be found in an "organic life".

The author of the comic strips is David Ratte who is well-known in France for his "Toxic Planet" series that recount funny tales from a world in which the air is so polluted that everyone has to wear gas masks.

In addition to the comic strips the publication explains the facts behind the cartoons and also covers what both the individual and the EU can do to ensure a healthier and better future.



Choosing our Future can be downloaded in English and French at www.choosingourfuture.eu

PAN Europe announces highest ever levels of pesticides in foods

Fruits, vegetables and cereals sold throughout the European Union contain record levels of pesticides – according to official data announced by PAN Europe in mid October. Almost half of fruits, vegetables and cereals are now contaminated with pesticides – a substantial increase on the level seen just five years ago. Some of the pesticides most common in the food chain are classified as carcinogenic, mutagenic, or disruptive to the hormonal system.

The findings of the EU food monitoring report (2008) were pre-published by PAN Europe just days before politicians in Brussels debated new EU pesticide legislation – including a proposal to eliminate the most hazardous pesticides from use in food production.

'These are the worst pesticide results we've ever seen', said Elliott Cannell, Coordinator of PAN Europe. 'A record proportion of fruits and vegetables are contaminated, while 23 pesticides were detected at levels high enough to present an acute risk to public health – according to the EU's own risk calculations.'

'The need to reduce exposure to hazardous pesticides is more urgent now than ever. Politicians in

Brussels must back the removal of the worst pesticides from the food chain, and ensure that hazardous pesticides are replaced with safer alternatives wherever possible.'

According to an advance copy of the forthcoming EU food monitoring report, seen by PAN Europe:

- Forty nine percent of fruits, vegetables and cereals contain pesticides. This is the highest ever level of pesticide contamination recorded in the EU and represents an increase of around 20% over the past 5 year period.
- 4.7% of fruits, vegetables and cereals contain pesticides at concentrations above maximum legal limits while over 10%

contain 4 or more different pesticide residues. Food products sold in the EU now contain 354 different pesticides – the highest total ever recorded.

- Five of the pesticides found most often in food products sold in the European Union are classified as carcinogenic, mutagenic, toxic to reproduction, or disruptive to the hormonal system. These substances are maneb, procymidone, iprodione, carbendazim, and deltamethrin.
- For the first time, imidacloprid – a controversial pesticide banned in France due to links with mass bee deaths – has been listed among the most common pesticide residues in foods.



News of the record levels of pesticides in foods made front page headlines in Brussels

'Invisible Pesticides' as seen on Bulgarian National TV

On 12 August, Bulgarian National Television, 'Channel 1' screened 'Invisible Pesticides' – a 30 minute documentary produced in association with Valentina Lukova, Head of the 'Toxic Substances' Programme at 'National Movement Friends of the Earth'. The broadcast marked the culmination of weeks of filming across Bulgaria, not to mention months spent pitching the concept to commissioning editors at the country's number one television channel.

'The first day it seemed like making a film is a really stressful experience,' explained Valentina Lukova. 'I had to walk through the biggest open market in Sofia city and talk to the camera... which was itself moving forwards all the time. At noon the market is full of people – mainly old and not very rich. Fruit vendors were not always friendly. Customers behaved oppositely, cheerfully interacting with the camera and explaining how difficult their lives are and how the sellers often cheat them... Amid all this turmoil I had to talk calmly about pesticides.'

Another major challenge was deciding what to include in the programme. 'It was a hard job to choose. You know how much pesticides affect our lives. But if we put every topic in the film it would be 2 hours long – so we had to miss out

many aspects that we would have wanted to include.' In the final cut, the documentary focuses on the presence of pesticides in foods, the health impacts of pesticides, and water contamination. Those interviewed for the film include: representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, a Bulgarian MEP, as well as organic farmers, pesticide retailers, farmers and consumers.

'Invisible Pesticides' has now been screened many times in Bulgaria; not only on national and regional channels, but on several of the country's cable TV networks. 'At the same time, for weeks and months no one was quite sure whether the project would ever happen', remembers Valentina. 'Some time back in spring, they asked me for a short summary of what I would like to say in the film. Then more than three months passed by and nobody called or wrote to me, so I started to thinking the documentary had fallen through. Then suddenly the film company called and said "OK – we're going to make the film, but we have to start immediately."

'At first I was happy and very excited. It was a real challenge – it is so different to talk about pesticides when you know you are communicating with a public audience – most of who would know very little about

the issues. Everything had to be 'translated' to make it accessible. I also had to get used to talking to the camera – which is not like talking to a person. The camera would just stare at me saying nothing. No smile, no approval, no arguments, no questions. At times I felt like I was going crazy – just walking around Bulgaria and talking to myself.

'Making the documentary was about creating a public discussion on pesticides. For too long policy decisions relating to pesticides have been made in the dark... we wanted to shed light on the issues as well as the solutions – to influence the authorities, decision makers, farmers and the wider public. So far we've had numerous responses from the public... but no official response... I feel that kind of response has yet to come.'



Top – the title short 'Invisible Pesticides'; below - laboratory analysis of pesticide residues in food

MDRGF: 'Our Children will Accuse Us' – a film by Jean Paul Jaud



French public awareness of the damaging impacts of pesticides took another giant leap forward on 5 November with the film premier of 'Nos enfants nous accuseront', a feature length documentary now showing in mainstream cinemas across France. The film is the brainchild of Jean Paul Jaud a famous French TV Director who became aware of the consequences of industrial agriculture having recovered from cancer a few years ago.

Following his illness Jean Paul decided to make a documentary on the effects of hazardous pesticides. His film centres on Barjac – a typical rural village situated in southern France where local residents decided to take action against the effects of pesticides and whose school canteen now serves only organic food.

In preparing to make the documentary Jean Paul Jaud

approached MDRGF to advise him

on pesticides and health. 'Nos enfants nous accuseront' has already created quite a buzz in France receiving widespread publicity in the French national media. A six minute on-line preview of the film can be found at www.nosenfantsnousaccuseront-lefilm.com (French with English subtitles).

ECHO: Journalists keen to report on pesticides

Over the past year Slovenian NGO ECHO has found success in highlighting pesticide issues through the country's media. With their media coverage in 2008 including four significant articles in prominent journals and a front page headlined story in a major national newspaper ECHO feels journalists are finally taking the harmful effects of pesticides seriously.

Since its foundation in 2003 ECHO has been actively engaged with pesticide issues. Raising awareness about the impacts of pesticides has been one of its key activities. However, it has only been this year that the media has shown a strong interest, not just in

reporting on pesticide issues, but also in writing longer articles about their harmful effects. ECHO has ensured this new found media interest has been put to good use and has grabbed the opportunity to inform the public about the severe negative impacts of pesticide exposure. It now cooperates with some journalists on a regular basis, especially those covering topics about mothers, children and families.

Some of their media achievements include:

- Journal Super mami (Super Mum): "Don't poison your children and yourself"
- Journal Noseènica (Pregnant Woman): "Pregnant women exposed to chemicals dangerous for unborn baby"

- Journal Otok in dru ina (Child and Family): "Pesticide exposure is a huge problem"
- Special issue of the journal Dojenèek (Baby): "Mothers, protect your babies from pesticides exposure"

ECHO's greatest media success so far occurred this October when their press release exposing the high levels of pesticide contamination in food met a with huge media response. The story put ECHO on the front page of *urnal24*, a daily newspaper with the largest circulation in Slovenia.



WORKING TOGETHER

PAN Europe: Message in a bottle

In spring 2008 PAN Europe coordinated an EU-wide analysis of pesticide residues found in wine. Working with MDRGF, Greenpeace Germany and Friends of the Earth Austria (Global 2000), PAN Europe purchased 40 bottles of wine from across the EU and sent them to laboratories to be tested for pesticide residues. The results gained international media coverage making front page news headlines as far away as South Africa.

All 34 conventional wine samples analysed were shown to contain pesticide residues. On average over

four different pesticides were detected in each bottle – with one sample containing 10 different residues. Wines found to contain pesticides included three cru class vintages from Bordeaux as well as more affordable wines from France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Portugal, South Africa, Chile, and Australia.

Of the 24 different pesticides identified five are classified as carcinogenic, mutagenic, reprotoxic or endocrine disrupting in the European Union. A further three are suspected carcinogens. Speaking at the PAN Europe press conference held in the European Parliament, Professor Nicolas van Larebeke, an expert on the health impacts of pesticide exposure made clear the dangers associated with pesticide residues in the EU food chain: "In biomonitoring studies on adults, adolescents, young mothers and children it has been shown that very low doses of mutagenic and endocrine disrupting substances, such as those present in the body of almost every citizen of industrial countries, are indeed associated with adverse health effects". Details of the wine analysis



Francois Veillerette, President of MDRGF and Board Member of PAN Europe speaking at the media conference in the European Parliament on 26 March. Background Hiltrud Breyer MEP (Greens/ EFA)

were reported in newspapers worldwide including; USA Today, International Herald Tribune, Liberation, Bild, Welt, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, Spiegel, Kleine Zeitung, The Daily Mail and The Daily Telegraph, and in radio and television broadcasts in France, Austria, UK and South Africa. A full analysis of the results, together with the PAN Europe press release are available to be downloaded from the PAN Europe website: www.pan-europe.info.



In Vino Veritas

Who sells the best grapes? Testing supermarkets across Europe

In mid-October, Greenpeace Germany, Milieudéfense, MDRGF, Legambiente, Levego and PAN Europe came together to conduct a coordinated analysis of table grapes sold by 18 major EU food retailers. 124 different grape samples were bought from across five different countries and sent for laboratory analysis. The results complete with national league tables were published on 24 November.

Ninety nine percent of grapes tested contained pesticides. On average seven pesticides were detected per sample. One third of grapes were classified as 'Not Recommended' for consumers owing to critical levels of pesticide contamination.

Six grape samples contained pesticides at concentrations above EU maximum legal limits. These were purchased from Auchan, Carrefour and ALDI in France, from Esselunga in Italy, and from the wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Hamburg, Germany (Großmarkt Hamburg).

Two samples of Italian-grown grapes contained the banned insecticide endosulfan. Use of endosulfan has been illegal since 31 December 2007 following the announcement of an EU-wide ban in 2005. Both samples of affected grapes were purchased from ALDI in France.



Ninety nine percent of grapes tested were shown to contain pesticides

Grapes sold by food wholesaler Metro in Germany contained the carcinogenic fungicide 'procymidone' at levels above the ARfD according to standards established by the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment and World Health Organisation. Worryingly, while the pesticides present in this grape sample exceeded recognised safety levels, they did not breach EU legal limits.

In total 38 of the 124 grape samples (30.6%) received 'Not Recommended' status according to evaluation protocols pioneered by Greenpeace. The Greenpeace system takes into account residue levels exceeding the maximum residue levels, the Acute Reference Dose (ARfD), and the Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI), as well as multiple exposure and the special sensitivity of children.

Despite widespread pesticide contamination some supermarkets performed much better than others. The best grapes were sold by LIDL – the German discount retailer, which beat leading quality brands such as Carrefour, Albert Heijn, and Super de Boer.

The results also gave the first opportunity to assess the impact of new EU legislation introduced in September 2008 which substantially increased many of the maximum residue limits (MRLs) for food products sold in the EU. While only six samples of grapes breached MRLs at the time of purchase in October 2008, 37 samples would have exceeded legal limits had the grapes been purchased in 2005. These figures demonstrate the dramatic relaxation in EU food standards over the past three years.



Aurele Clemencin, a spokesperson for MDRGF, announcing the results of the supermarket testing initiative on French national television

PAN Europe: Counselling the Ministers

In February 2008, PAN Europe authored two policy briefings aimed at informing the Council of Ministers – now charged with reviewing the Commission's proposed pesticides Regulation. These documents were translated by network members across the European Union and forwarded to national political representatives. PAN Europe's first analysis argued against

the proposal to divide the EU into three zones – within which 'obligatory mutual recognition' would force each member state to authorise all substances approved by all other countries. The second paper aimed to counter industry claims that the elimination of exposure to carcinogenic, mutagenic, reprotoxic and endocrine disrupting pesticides would impact on agricultural

productivity. Our submission helped to confirm the Commission's earlier estimate that just 4.5% of active substances might be affected.



PAN Europe's Annual Network Conference

Hosted by Brussels-based 'Health and Environment Alliance' (HEAL), this year's PAN Europe Annual Network Conference took place on 15-16 September in the Belgian capital. Situated directly opposite the Commission's Headquarters and just a short walk from the European Parliament, HEAL's offices

provided the perfect location for members to reflect on the future of EU pesticides legislation.

The PAN Europe conference was attended by 26 delegates from 17 European countries and provided a useful opportunity to share experiences with one another

and to plan joint initiatives to be scheduled for the coming weeks and months.



From left, clockwise: Hans Muilerman (Natuur en Milieu), Emelie Hansson (SSNC), Daniel Lesinsky (CEPTA) and Monica Guarinoni (HEAL)



Henriette Christensen explains the political calendar for autumn 2008

GLOBAL IMPACTS

PAN Germany/ PAN UK project 'Fibre, Food and Beauty: Make it move' opens with workshops

On 24th-25th September, PAN Germany, PAN UK, OBEPAB from Benin, and Enda Pronat from Senegal launched their 'Fibre, Food and Beauty' project with two workshops in Hamburg, Germany. These events aimed to explore the social, environmental and ethical issues relating to smallholder livelihoods and ethical consumption, and to support businesses in broadening the market for organic cotton.

For many farmers in the developing world, cotton is an essential cash crop. In Africa alone, 20 million people depend on cotton farming as a key source of income. However, dependency on cotton carries severe adverse impacts for farmers when market conditions deteriorate. Organic cotton production offers proven opportunities to reduce dependency on conventional cotton markets and to help cotton growing communities to escape from poverty. Its value is especially relevant in today's current climate of food price escalation, rising costs of agricultural inputs, including pesticide and

synthetic fertiliser costs, and unstable cotton prices.

It is against this backdrop that the joint PAN Germany/ PAN UK project was established. Funded by EuropeAid, the initiative will run from 2008 to 2010 and work with African partners OBEPAB from Benin and ENDA Pronat from Senegal. It aims to raise awareness among European businesses, donors, NGOs and consumers, and to build support for better market models to help reduce dependency on cotton within organic farming systems. It also collaborates with Organic Exchange's Farm System Crops Market Development Programme. The first workshop which was



held in Hamburg on 24 September was aimed at NGOs and public and private donors and was entitled 'Using diversity to reduce dependency on cotton and combat poverty'. The second workshop on 25 September, also in Hamburg, was addressed to businesses and was entitled, 'Corporate Social Responsibility in a development context: Using diversity to reduce dependency on cotton and combat poverty'.



Workshop panel discussion with Ricardo Guimaraes, FLO, Ken Hayes, Soil Association, Alexandra Perschau, PAN Germany and Marion Buley.

Global 2000 campaigns for fair trade, organic pineapples

Once seen as an exotic fruit, pineapples are increasingly part of the mainstream European diet. Europe now imports more pineapples than ever before. Here in Austria consumers eat 12 million kg of pineapples every year – three times more than a decade ago.

Almost one third of pineapples exported worldwide are grown in Costa Rica – a country which exports 75% of its entire pineapple harvest. Rising consumer demand has led to rapid growth in the production of Costa Rican pineapples which have become the country's number one nontraditional export.

The growing demand for pineapples holds the potential to drive much needed economic gains in Costa Rica. But sadly those working in the plantations see few of the benefits. Agricultural labourers work a 12 hour day – eating, drinking, urinating and resting in the fields at constant risk of exposure to the sun, the rain and to storms. The average wage is just €0.75. And to avoid paying minimum wages plantation bosses routinely hire workers for just two or three months at a time; thus denying them access to statutory welfare entitlements.



Costa Rica accounts for one third of global pineapple exports

In addition to chronic low pay and treacherous working conditions, those working in Costa Rica's pineapple plantations face exposure to hazardous pesticides. During the growing seasons insecticides and fungicides are sprayed onto the crop. After the harvest herbicides are used to control 'weeds'. Workers often spray pesticides without proper safety equipment and with inadequate understanding of the dangers of pesticide exposure.

The expansion of intensive pineapple production in Costa Rica has also brought negative environmental impacts as well as threats to rural livelihoods. Large areas used for traditional agriculture and livestock farming have been replaced

with plantations, while illegal deforestation has as trees are cleared to make way for pineapples plantations. Soil erosion, desiccation, disruption of local microclimates, and water pollution have all followed. Communities living near to plantations suffer the additional menace of exposure to agricultural pesticides. In some villages drinking water has been contaminated and villagers report an increasing prevalence of asthma, allergies and nausea. Given the widespread environmental and labour rights abuses associated with Costa Rican pineapple production, and the role of European consumers in driving increased demand, Global 2000 launched a campaign aimed at promoting support

for sustainable pineapple production initiatives.

The NGO published an investigative report aimed at publicising the negative social and environmental impacts of pineapple production, and called on consumers and retailers to support fair trade, organic pineapple consumption. We told Austrian consumers, 'if you can afford to eat pineapples as a luxury from

time to time, you should not do so at the expense of Costa Rican plantation workers and the environment', said Lisa Kernegger, campaigner at Global 2000.

As a result of Global 2000's initiatives on pineapples national supermarket chains were persuaded to expand their selection of products to include fair trade, organic pineapples. 'Since February

2008 not only M-Preis, but also Merkur, BILLA and ADEG, have all carried fair trade organic alternatives. 'By buying fair trade, organic pineapples, Austrians can continue to enjoy eating pineapples whilst providing reasonable economic rewards for Costa Rican plantation workers and at a lower cost to human health and the environment. The message is really getting through.'

Friends of the Earth: GM increases pesticide application

A new study from Friends of the Earth published in January 2008 debunks one of Biotech's biggest claims: that GM crops can deliver decreases in pesticide use. Reviewing over ten years of data, the NGO's investigation shows not only that this prediction is wrong, but the adoption of GM crops has led to ever greater pesticide use. Biotechnology companies have yet to introduce a single GM crop capable of giving higher yields, enhanced nutrition, or drought-tolerance – while disease tolerant GM crops are almost non-existent. Instead virtually 100% of the global acreage planted with commercial GM crops has one or both of two basic traits: herbicide-tolerance and insecticide-resistance.

According to Friends of the Earth, herbicide tolerant crops are 'pesticide-

promoting' because they enable farmers to spray a particular herbicide more frequently and indiscriminately without fear of damaging the crop. Greater application of a specific herbicide generates herbicide resistant weeds. (GM crops have spawned an epidemic of herbicide resistant weeds in US, Argentina and Brazil for example.) And with weeds showing greater resistance farmers are led to apply yet more pesticides, which is perhaps no accident given that the major companies selling GM seeds also sell pesticides.

The report entitled 'Who benefits from GM crops? The rise in pesticide use' was Friends of the Earth's third annual GM review and was published to coincide with the yearly progress update from the 'International Service for

the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications' (ISAAA). The ISAAA is an industry funded organisation that 'delivers the benefits of new agricultural biotechnologies to the poor in developing countries'.



'Who benefits from GM crops' can be downloaded from Friends of the Earth's website at <http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/>

TAKING ACTION

PAN Germany demands ban on pesticides toxic to bees

On 17 July, PAN Germany, BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany) and the German Bee Keepers Association held a press conference in Berlin to draw attention to the impact of pesticides on German bee colonies. In May 2008 over 11,000 bee colonies in southern Germany were reportedly poisoned by the Bayer CropScience pesticide Poncho. Poncho is the European trade name for clothianidin, a neuro-active substance and a member of the neonicotinoid class of insecticides of which the widely used imidacloprid is also a member. Last year Bayer made 793 million euros with their sales of neonicotinoids alone. Neonicotinoids are systemic chemicals which, following application to seeds, work their way through the plant attacking the nervous system of any insect they come into contact with. The bees were killed after they came into contact with sweetcorn treated with Poncho prior to planting. In response to this tragic drop in bee numbers the German Office for Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) immediately ordered the suspension of

the approval for use of eight seed treatment products containing active ingredients toxic to bees. Antarc (imidacloprid and cyfluthrin), Chinook (imidacloprid, cyfluthrin), Cruiser ORS (thiamethoxam, metalaxyl-M, fludioxonil), Cruiser 350 FS (thiamethoxam), Elado (clothianidin, cyfluthrin), Faibel (imidacloprid, methiocarb), Mesuroil (methiocarb) and Poncho (clothianidin) were all withdrawn. But, incredibly, only one month later the approval for four of these products, all used to treat rapeseed, was reinstated. With the sowing of treated rapeseed imminent PAN Germany and its partners launched a media campaign in protest and the bee keepers expressed their fear of once again losing their bees due to pesticide poisoning.

PAN Germany and its partners are demanding:

- At a national level – an immediate ban on the use of rapeseed treated with pesticides toxic to bees and a general suspension of the approval of pesticides toxic to bees;
- At an EU level - Withdrawal of the approval for all active substances that are considered to be toxic for bees;
- An improvement to the guidelines for testing bee toxicity as part of the assessment for pesticide approval;
- A ban on cultivating sweetcorn in mono culture; and
- Support of organic agriculture.

Germany is not alone in this disaster: The collapse of bee colonies is a phenomenon known all over the world. Only this spring similar disasters were reported in Italy and Slovenia.



Berlin, 17 July media event. From the left: Manfred Heederer, German bee keepers association DBIB, Susan Haffmans, PAN Germany, Hubert Weiger, BUND.

FWFF: Marching for sustainable agriculture in Bulgaria

Braving bears and tired after a fortnight's journey, campaigners at Bulgarian NGO 'Fund for Wild Fauna and Flora' (FWFF) finally arrived at the Central Balkan National Park on 26 June. With them came FWFF's flock of 650 Karakachan sheep – an ancient breed traditional in Bulgaria – as well as four guard dogs to mind the herd.



FWFF's flock of 650 sheep journey towards summer pastures

Entrance to the National Park, home to some of Europe's rarest wildlife, marked the end of a two week trek intended to help support Bulgaria's natural wildlife species and to showcase the ancient practice of 'transhumance'; once common throughout Bulgaria, but not practiced since the arrival of Communism.

'The total distance we traveled was about 200 km – which witnessed a lot of challenges for the shepherds,' said Nadya Vangelova, President of FWFF. 'The worst hazard was the bears which came among the sheep one night as we slept up in the mountains. Fortunately the guard dogs managed to scare them off and so prevented an attack on the herd.'

Transhumance is the vertical seasonal movement of livestock, typically to higher pastures in summer and to lower valleys in winter.

Herding communities traditionally kept permanent settlements in the valleys. In summer the herd would journey up to the hills together with a small subset of people necessary to tend them.

For centuries this ancient practice lent a natural rhythm to the agricultural calendar of the Balkan Peninsula – including Bulgaria. But in recent years it has all but disappeared. According to FWFF this has led to overgrazing in the country's lowlands, and an increased dependence on imported feed, agricultural inputs and veterinary products.

Mountain biodiversity has suffered too. The seasonal movement of cattle into the country's highlands worked to keep the mountain pastures open – thus

providing valuable habitat for many native species of plants, birds and mammals. Endangered birds of prey such as the Imperial Eagle, Lesser Kestrel and European Soudlik are highly dependent on the existence of open habitats that are well grazed and so the diversity of plants and insects is high. Sheep manure also boosts growth of mountain vegetation.

FWFF is well placed to promote traditional farming methods in Bulgaria as it runs an Eco-farm and a medium sized flock of sheep in a typical pastoral landscape near to the Kotel Mountains. Following the success of the project the organizers plan to stage a photo exhibition promoting the Transhumance together with an accompanying book and film.

PAN Europe and Natuur en Milieu launch legal challenge to new MRLs



On 28 August 2008, PAN Europe and Natuur en Milieu launched a joint legal challenge aimed at blocking substantial increases in the level of pesticides allowed in food produce. According to an analysis by Global 2000, Commission Regulation 149/2008, which sets Maximum Residue Levels for food products, could see two thirds of legal limits on pesticides greatly relaxed.

'The Commission has failed on its obligation to set legal limits at the lowest achievable level', said Hans Mulierman, spokesperson for Natuur en Milieu. 'Legal action is now necessary to force a rethink'.

The joint challenge by PAN Europe and Natuur en Milieu follows a decision by DG SANCO issued 1 July to deny the NGOs' request for an Internal Review of the new Regulation (see PAN Europe Newsletter: Summer 2008).

PAN Europe and Natuur en Milieu will now ask the Court of First Instance to annul the Commission's decision and force DG SANCO to re-examine the legitimacy of the incoming MRL protocols.

A study by Greenpeace/Global 2000 published on the same day identified several hundred residue limits that are rendered unsafe by new legislation – under the EU's own safety standards and methodologies. In particular the consumption of apples, pears, grapes, tomatoes and peppers could now pose health risks for children. 'By raising the legal limits the European Commission expects us to put up with more and more pesticides in our food. Children should be safe to eat as much fruit and vegetables as they like. The EU must revise these unsafe residue limits immediately,' demanded Greenpeace chemicals expert, Ulrike Kallee.

A network getting noticed...

News of the joint legal challenge was carried by media outlets across the European Union. Francois Veillerette (MDRGF) gave interviews to TF1, and Radio France International (RFI) while the story was also reported by Le Monde and Liberation. Janos Pal (Levego)

gave interviews to Hungarian media outlets: Ózd Városi TV, Sláger radio, Rádióplusz, Szent István radio, and Klubrádió. In Italy, Francesco Ferrante and Rina Guadagnini (Legambiente) spoke with Corriere della sera Radio, Econews, Radiocapital and EcoRadio while Daniel Lesinsky (CEPTA) was interviewed by National Radio in Slovakia. Newspapers in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium Luxembourg and Slovenia also covered the story.



The joint analysis by Greenpeace/Global 2000 published in August 2008 shows that several hundred residue limits are now unsafe for consumers - according to the EU's own safety standards and methodologies.

MDRGF: 'Semaine sans Pesticides 2008' is biggest ever

The third and biggest ever 'Semaine sans Pesticides' was held over the last 10 days of March. This year the celebrations encompassed over 400 events across France and Belgium – with coordinated actions also occurring in Austria, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Quebec, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, and United Kingdom. In France pesticide campaigners marked the occasion by holding conferences, movie projections, debates, exhibitions, and agricultural training workshops, as well as events in garden centres, farms, markets and schools. A high profile action drew attention to the catastrophic impact of pesticides on French groundwater resources as activists in two regions of France climbed water towers

and dropped banners which read: 'Save Water!'

Semaine sans Pesticides is organised by 'Citizens' Actions for Pesticides Alternatives' (ACAP) – a civil society network initiated by MDRGF in 2004. The first ever Semaine sans Pesticides was held in March 2006 and involved around 90 events aimed at raising greater public awareness of the health and environmental impacts of hazardous pesticides, and demonstrating viable alternatives to toxic agrochemicals. Since its birth the movement has grown considerably. ACAP now includes some 170 individuals and organisations. Activities organised as part of Semaine sans Pesticides directly engage many thousands of French citizens on the issue

of pesticide use, while local, national and international media coverage of affiliated actions reach out to a wider audience still.

For more information please visit the SSP website at www.semaine-sanspesticides.com.



French eco activists at one of hundreds of events held in celebration of the third annual Semaine sans Pesticides

Milieudefensie: Dutch farmers launch better foods label

Farmers belonging to Dutch agricultural cooperative 'FrEsteem' have become the first agricultural producers in the Netherlands to market fruits and vegetables under the newly created 'Better for Health and Environment' label. Tomatoes carrying the logo hit supermarket shelves in October and were available to consumers shopping at C1000 supermarket.

The food produce labelling scheme is a joint initiative established by FrEsteem agricultural producers and the 'Weet Wat Je Eet' (Know what you eat) partnership – which comprises Dutch environmental NGOs Milieudefensie and Natuur en Milieu, as well as consumer organisation Goede Waar & Co. The project aims to help consumers identify fruits and vegetables grown under low



'Better for Health and Environment': Four members of pioneering Dutch farming cooperative FrEsteem

pesticide protocols and taking extra care to protect health and the environment.

"Following our supermarket campaigns for better protection of the environment and health, we were approached by the farmers of FrEsteem," said Rene Houkema, Agricultural Policy Officer, Milieudefensie. "They were interested to develop a way of identifying quality food produce grown under low pesticide protocols, which would meet the recommendations of our 'Know what you eat' campaign'. Within several months, together we developed the 'Better for Health and Environment' agricultural scheme."

"It's fantastic to see the first fresh fruits and vegetables now on sale in Dutch supermarkets carrying the 'Better for Health and Environment' logo" said Rene. Our vision now is that these environmental and health criteria become a kind of Dutch standard carried by all mainstream foods".

Foods carrying the 'Better for Health and Environment' label must contain:

- no residues present above 70% of the MRL
- a maximum of 3 different pesticide residues
- the combined sum of percentage ARfDs does not exceed 100%



The 'Better for Health and Environment' logo identifies foods grown under low pesticide protocols

Farmers operating under the scheme must:

- endorse Integrated Pest Management protocols
- plan towards the eventual production of pesticide-free foods
- avoid spraying the 12 pesticides listed on the Dutch blacklist
- share all internal residues monitoring data
- avoid banned or unauthorised pesticides

- minimise energy use and emissions of greenhouse gases
 - reduce emissions of artificial light
 - reduce visual impacts on the environment
 - reduce emission of nutrients
- FrEsteem is a progressive Dutch agricultural cooperative encompassing 40 farmers growing tomatoes and sweet peppers with a combined agricultural area of 450 Ha. At present five producers

comply with the 'Better for Health and Environment' standards – producing 9,000 tonnes of sweet peppers and 36,000 tonnes of tomatoes. More FrEsteem farmers plan to carry the label.

Looking to the future, Dutch farmer and member of FrEsteem, Frank van Kleef, said other Dutch producers would want to comply with the standards amid growing consumer demand for quality mainstream food produce.

Greenpeace blacklists 327 highly toxic pesticides

On 7 February 2008 Greenpeace Germany published a list of 327 pesticides identified as being particularly hazardous to health and the environment. The list which includes 168 pesticide substances currently used in the EU was drawn up following an analysis conducted by two independent experts who examined the impacts of 1134 pesticide substances in use worldwide.

'In conventional agriculture highly hazardous pesticides are still sprayed on fruit, vegetables and cereals at an alarming scale,' explained Greenpeace toxics expert, Manfred Krautter. 'Chemicals that can cause cancer, impair the ability to reproduce or damage hormonal and immune systems should not be detected in our food. The

EU must also stop permitting substances which are harmful to the environment and threatening to bees or birds, and which contaminate groundwater. The legislation on approving pesticides now being discussed in Brussels must be improved accordingly.'

Consumers incur frequent dietary exposure to 13 of the most hazardous pesticides identified by the study. The BASF product iprodione, for example, is detected in over 2% of all food samples analysed in the European Union – despite being classified as a carcinogen under the EC Directive on Dangerous Substances. Another good example is imazalil, an insecticide manufactured by Syngenta and Bayer. Imazalil is the EU's most common food

contaminant, and is detected in one sixth of food samples analysed, despite being acutely toxic and suspected of causing cancer and damaging reproduction.

Greenpeace calls on both supermarkets and politicians to adopt pesticide blacklists in order to eradicate hazardous pesticides from the food chain. The report is available on-line in both German and English.



Danish Ecological Council: A new pesticide plan is on its way

The last few years have been a disaster for the Pesticide Use Reduction Policy in Denmark. Despite the country's Pesticide Plan stating a pesticide Treatment Frequency Index (TFI*) goal of 1.7 for 2009, recent data shows the use of pesticides is actually increasing from a TFI of 2.1 in 2002 to 2.5 in 2007.

A midway evaluation published in October 2008 highlights the reasons for this adverse trend. Firstly, the Pesticide Plan is voluntary so there is no economic incentive for the country's farmers to meet its goals. And secondly, farmers' pesticide use should match the economic optimal level. The economic optimal level is

influenced by crop price; higher crop prices make greater pesticide use financially viable. Though a TFI of 1.7 was the economic optimal level in 2003 a new study has shown the economic optimal level has been increasing. In 2008 a TFI of 2.08 was the economic optimal level with a low crop price and a TFI of



* The TFI expresses the average number of times per year agricultural land can be treated with the sold quantity of pesticides, assuming that the pesticides are used in the prescribed normal dosages. In Denmark the TFI is used as the most important indicator for the spraying intensity and the environmental load.

2.32 with a high crop price. The reasons for this advance can be broken down into:

- **More pest problems due to warmer autumn and winter temperatures**

Weeds are now growing much more in these seasons and farmers are therefore using more herbicides. The warmer autumns have also lengthened the aphid season, which spread yellow dwarf luteovirus to winter wheat and winter barley. Farmers have therefore begun to use insecticides into the autumn.

- **An increase in the intensive production of winter crops**

Production of winter crops has become much more intensive. When winter crops are produced on more than 60% this encourages the growth of

farm grass weeds and the use of herbicides is increased significantly.

- **Mechanical weeding has been priced out by new effective pesticides**

New effective herbicides have meant that the use of mechanical weeding in winter rape and sugar beets is no longer competitive compared to the use of herbicides.

- **Pesticides prices relative to crop prices are the lowest they have been since 1993**

The government is now preparing a new Pesticide Plan, which will come into force in 2010. The new plan will include higher taxes on pesticides. Today these are 54% of wholesale price for insecticides and 34% of the wholesale price for herbicides and fungicides.

Ecological Council is calling for a new plan with clear

goals and regulations. The plan's focus should be on pesticide use that is most harmful to the environment. In addition to higher taxes Danish Ecological Council is recommending:

- a ban on the intensive production of winter crops and the pesticide applications which are most harmful to nature e.g. the use of insecticides on cereals in spring;
- compulsory pesticide free buffer zones along watercourses and protected nature areas; and
- the promotion of the use of the best available technology for pesticide application e.g. spraying equipment with induction and GPS-equipment based on weed maps to minimise the use of pesticides.



DET ØKOLOGISKE RÅD



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