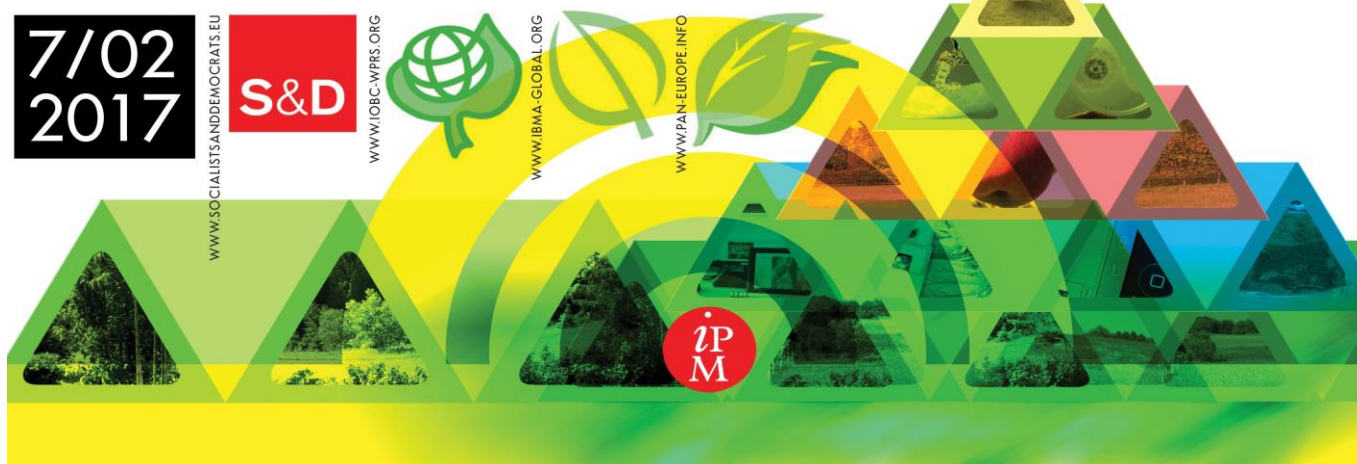


# 5<sup>TH</sup> SYMPOSIUM ON SUSTAINABLE USE OF PESTICIDES: UNLOCKING THE IPM TRIANGLE-USING GREEN TOOLS 1<sup>ST</sup> FOCUSING ON SUSTAINABLE GRAPE GROWING



## CHAIRMAN'S CONCLUSIONS

### 1. Background

The sustainable use of pesticides directive (EC/128/2009) is an extremely important mechanism for translating 25 years' progress on pesticides legislation and 20 years of EU ambition towards sustainable agriculture into practice. Progress on its successful implementation will bring benefits for farmers, consumers, the PPP industry, biodiversity, soil and water. An essential element of that progress is the development of IPM (integrated pest management) as a normal part of farming practice. Without rigorous IPM, the achievable benefits will not be achieved and public monies will continue to be diverted into clean up rather than other public priorities.

### 2. The 2017 Symposium

The fifth symposium, held at the European Parliament on 7 February 2017 was again organised by PAN, IOBC-WPRS and IBMA and hosted by Pavel Poc MEP. Its focus was on the development of IPM in the grape sector and it dealt with sustainable production systems and socio-economic, marketing and environmental benefits of green business in this sector. (The presentations are

available at <http://www.ibma-global.org/en/news/read-the-programme-and-register---5th-symposium-unlocking-the-ipm-triangle----using-green-tools-1st> and <http://www.pan-europe.info/events/conferences/5th-annual-symposium-sustainable-use-directive-pesticides>).

Featured updates from Luxembourg on its substantial IPM progress through rural development and more broadly from Italy and others on their journey towards IPM. The European Commission also provided an update with respect to progress on pesticides legislation and presentations from the business sector provided insights into their approach.

### 3. IPM simply explained.

Modern agriculture is predicated on high yields across almost all sectors including large scale arable, fruit and vegetables. High inputs and outputs are the norm and monoculture and continuous cropping part of the standard formula of successful profitable intensive farming. In this system, by far the most common in the EU, end of pipe solutions to problems associated with production are the norm.

IPM takes a very different approach.

The basis is holistic, dependent on agronomic practices such as crop rotation, resistant varieties, under sowing, intercropping and the protection and enhancement especially of beneficial insects. The second layer of IPM is monitoring, forecasting and early warning systems. In place and fully operational, they provide confidence for IPM uptake. Finally, the potential for mechanical, physical and natural control and especially for biological control allows farmers to accept that all the tools are available to ensure high levels of output while retaining the possibility for chemical control as a last resort. Many aspects of IPM are as old as farming itself but few, any longer, form part of normal farm practice. Modern IPM, very clearly supported by farmers at the various symposia to date, requires a high level of understanding and training. Profitability is an essential element just as it is for current intensive farming systems. IPM is required under the SUPD (article XIV).

### 4. Progress reported at the symposium.

The various symposia to date have put emphasis on areas where successful IPM or parts thereof are practiced. These include a detailed analysis of the apple sector in 2015 where orchard redesign is contributing to success and

information related to the greenhouse sector in 2013 where consumer calls for pesticide free fruit and vegetables has driven the retail sector to enforcing the higher standards of IPM on producers; these higher standards have now become an important selling point and profitability base for producers.

The extent of progress in the viticulture sector outlined this year is very positive with many examples provided notably in Luxembourg and Italy, but also in Portugal and Germany regarding measures to ensure the availability of protective biodiversity and with respect to biological control. It is currently estimated that about 230,000 ha of vines are covered by pheromone protection to counter insect attack. Likewise, a revival in interest in local grape varieties is being partly driven by their resistance to infection. Copper use has been reduced by up to 75% in many areas and IPM as a wine marketing tool is gaining traction. Outside the vine sector, the symposium was informed about progress in treating fusarium in wheat leading to the potential opening of arable farming to IPM which should be extremely useful, for example, to France in reaching its self-imposed target of reducing PPP use by 50% under Ecophyto by 2025.

## 5. Some uncomfortable realities

The progress outlined is very encouraging from the viewpoint of research, producer interest and the gradual build-up of improved farm practice and strengthening biological control while retaining chemicals as a last resort. Nevertheless, it is not the complete picture and serious hurdles to full implementation remain.

It is worthwhile looking at the main building blocks of IPM from a regulatory and practice viewpoint to ascertain the extent of determination to achieve it.

- Rotations; No current requirement exists within the CAP and little evidence of any change to continuous and largely monoculture based arable farming. Crop diversification does require more than one crop on larger farms and is a step forward in conceptual terms but a significant retreat from the possibilities available to MS in previous CAP reforms. Continuous maize and its associated problems are a clear demonstration of the lack of progress to date.
- Under sowing and inter-cropping are not included in the CAP but there are occasional agri-environmental measures supporting these practices.
- Protection and enhancement of beneficial insects has been confined to agri-environmental measures and the long decline in species density in arable areas provides clear evidence that such measures, although clearly

- beneficial, are far too thinly spread to support biodiversity which could reduce predation of crops. Very positively, the CAP ecological focus areas have real potential to aid the enhancement of beneficial insects particularly with the introduction of a PPP use ban from 2018 at the latest.
- Monitoring, forecasting and early warning systems. There is a long history of early warning systems for crops such as potatoes but, with few exceptions, there is little systematic establishment of centres which could do this work and provide up to date and sufficiently local information for farmers.
  - Biological control has made some progress but it is still largely confined to specific crops rather than broader arable agriculture. At the 2015 symposium, there was enormous interest in the concept of CAP risk insurance as a means of supporting IPM and some progress has been made but it's needs further development and encouragement.
  - Chemical control, seen as a last resort within IPM, remains the overwhelmingly most significant approach to crop protection in every sector with the exception of greenhouses. Registration and use has been tightened in continuous legislative upgrading but use, albeit with changing products and emphasis, remains remarkably constant. Overall PPP use in the EU remains at about 350,000t (ai) annually which does not suggest that IPM is having a major impact to date.

## 6. Why do barriers to IPM still exist?

The fundamental difficulties regarding IPM uptake reported at each symposium remain almost as valid in 2017 as at each of the previous symposia. Briefly, and including improvements, they are;

- The entire existing registration process for biological control and other low risk substances remains unfit for purpose. There are too many stories of it taking 10 years to gain registration, likewise of high costs making it virtually impossible for SME to achieve registration for niche markets. Some regulatory progress appears probable soon and, if achieved, will be immensely welcome and helpful for IPM as product availability is certainly a factor in farmers' economic decisions.
- The continuing lack of adequate research funding. There may be some opportunities here and for biological control centres through European Investment Partnerships and this needs work to come to fruition.

- The seeming hesitation of some stakeholders to buy fully into the vista IPM offers and therefore not to see the enormous long-term benefits it offers all. Legislation can be a driver of innovation which, in turn, can provide worldwide opportunities and transform EU based companies into world leaders in increasingly safer plant protection. But belief, buy-in and investment are required.
- The twin realities of limited ambition in MS NAPs and the failure of the Commission to publish its 2014 report give a signal that the SUPD and IPM are not of importance. The inevitable conclusion to be drawn is, therefore, that the contribution they could make to human health and the environment is not understood or appreciated. As a follow, on to the apparent lack of urgency, early linkage to cross compliance within the CAP is at serious risk. The Catch 22 aspect of non-implementation and thus non-inclusion is well understood and its consequences are ever clearer.
- Additional to the current lack of official ambition regarding the directive is the reality that, beyond the Commission report due in 2018, there is very little in the directive to keep it alive and politically relevant. So, if the 2018 report is not forthcoming and delivered on time then much of the momentum to deliver IPM will wither.

## 7. Recommendations

The continued absence of the Commission report has damaged credibility in the SUPD and in IPM. This needs urgent redressing not by a belated report but by real political action. The following recommendations are made;

- The European Parliament should fill the void created by the Commission by producing an own initiative report on the implementation of the SUPD, including a best/worst performing MS assessment and addressing the potential of IPM.
- The Commission should now clearly indicate its commitment to deliver the report due by November 2018 fully and on time. Accompanying it, and in full cooperation with all stakeholders, it should prepare a roadmap, with milestones, to full IPM which should inform and influence its approach to achieving the sustainable use of pesticides.
- An ongoing difficulty with the SUPD is that while responsibility for it lies within DG SANTE, both DGs AGRI and ENV have an overwhelming interest in its full implementation given their responsibilities for sustainable agriculture and a healthy environment. To these can be added RTD from

- the perspective of research. If the Commission is to commit seriously to IPM then a task force of these DGs will be essential.
- The Commission should examine and report to the Council and EP how each of a series of policy instruments can contribute to IPM including not just the CAP but also Research funding, EIP and LIFE funding. In the 7EAP, the Commission committed itself to a toxic free environment and this needs translation, to the extent possible to actions in the PPP area. This work should form part of the preparation for the post 2020 financial perspective.
  - A multi-actor vision for a fully sustainable plant protection products industry should be proposed and agreed by 2020. In doing so, it should recognise that IPM is a business opportunity rather than a constraint and an important aspect of attaining a positive and helpful image among European and global consumers.
  - NGOs, to the extent they are financially capable, need to exploit the potential of IPM to address water pollution, biodiversity decline, soil depletion and air pollution as well as the benefits to be gained for human health. There is a growing tide towards IPM and the NGO sector engagement will be essential if that tide is to provide a bounteous harvest.

Michael Hamell,  
Chairman of the symposium