

Wrap up and closure, **Sofia Parente**, Coordinator PAN Europe

This conference has the title “Alternatives to chemical crop protection for the reduction of risks and pesticide dependency”. Our purpose, and I think we have succeeded, was to address several types of alternatives. We looked at Integrated Pest Management and organic farming as strategies to reduce risks and pesticide dependency but we have also looked at alternative substances, And my feeling by the end of this conference is the completion of a circle, we started by listening to inspiring opening presentations that called for a change in the way we look at food production in Europe and in the world. We need to look at the vitality of rural economies when looking for sustainable agriculture. And although I believe organic is the only way forward, this represents a niche in the current agriculture market in Europe. Despite being in SANA, among over 600 exhibitors, this is still a niche. And despite we have listened from Andrea Ferrante that Italy has allocated 100million Euros for measures under the 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), this represents one part in a thousand of the total funds under CAP. And we finished the conference with an example of a regional association promoting organic farming that felt the need to provide education in schools and communities. Indeed, we need to change the concept of agriculture towards a concept that includes respect for the environment and the local communities.

We started by giving an overview on the global and European state of implementation of Integrated Pest Management. While PAN Europe advocates for more support and expansion of organic farming in Europe, we recognise that this is currently feasible only for a limited number of farms in the European farming universe. That is why we would like to see Integrated Crop and Pest Management as a minimum for all farms in Europe. But here, an important question arises: what standards of Integrated Pest Management do we need to achieve reduction of pesticide use and dependency?

Right now, there is no framework for Integrated Crop and Pest Management in Europe and different guidelines are applied in different regions. There are also different designations, many times applied subjectively: Integrated Production, Integrated Farming, Integrated Crop Management, Integrated Pest Management... For our understanding, let us use the designation Integrated Pest Management seen in the broader view of Integrated Crop Management that also involves, for example the management of soil fertility and ecological structures such as buffer margins.

Globally, we have seen in the presentation by Harry Van der Wulp how FAO is promoting Integrated Crop and Pest Management with good results among small scale farmers as a way to reduce pesticide use and pesticide dependency. In Europe, despite being around for many years and being supported as an agri-environmental measure under the Common Agriculture Policy, the total land under certified Integrated Pest Management is negligible. This is partly the result of the confusion and many different definitions and standards for Integrated Pest Management and missing political and institutional frameworks.

This might change with the new Directive for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides. Although lacking targets, timetables and indicators for success, this piece of legislation, adopted in July by the European Commission, sets Integrated Crop and Pest Management as a minimum to all farmers by 2014. General standards and crop-specific standards will have to be developed until then and we would like to see NGOs involved in this process and in the draft and implementation of National Action Plans for pesticides.

But this process will only work with clear and strong minimum standards. We are pleased to have heard from Mr. Bernd Freier good suggestions for minimum standards such as:

- Compliance with regionally determined upper limits of treatment frequency index in main crops;
- Usage of specific non-chemical control methods;
- Minimal quantity and quality of ecological structures, such as buffer margins, to be applied at the farm level.

Very important in this process is the creation of a successful extension programme dedicated to pesticide use reduction to give adequate support to farmers. Strong lessons can be taken from the successful example of Switzerland in organic farming here presented by Helga Willer from FIBL- Research Institute of Organic Agriculture. Factors for this success are a positive agri policy, a major involvement of the Swiss supermarket chains Coop and Migros and the activities of FIBL which unites organic farming research with a range of knowledge transfer activities like advice, training and technical material for farmers. Farmers are well informed through courses, technical leaflets and a monthly magazine.

We have also looked at alternative substances and I think we can safely conclude that the crop protection market is not geared towards low risk substances such as biopesticides up to now. The requirements for the registration of biopesticides are similar to those for the registration of chemical substances despite inherent their low risk. Changes have to be introduced in the legislation to help this market for low risk substances grow.

So is the current framework legislation for the promotion of alternatives and pesticide use reduction adequate? Clearly not, but we have an excellent opportunity to improve the current framework in Europe with a new Directive for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides and the revision of the current Directive for the placing of pesticides on the market. These developments will be particularly important for European countries that are not yet part of the European Union and where support to organic and Integrated Pest management is even lower.

In this conference, we have also seen different responses to the current legislation failure in terms of promotion of alternatives and pesticide use reduction. We have seen examples from the point of view of producers. We have seen in the presentation of Gianni Ceredi how Apofruit, an agricultural cooperative with more than 40 years and 3,600 associates as expanded from the region Romagna to the national level bringing the total fruit farming land area to nearly 10,000 hectares without losing the initial drive for continuous research for methods and techniques to reduce the use of agrochemicals. For more than 20 years Apofruit has been able to give its products a particular hallmark in the context of Integrated Production via a constantly updated and informed technical service. We have heard how they used public and private funded research schemes and trials combined with extension.

And we had examples of coordination between farmers, retailers and consumers. We have heard from Davide Sabbadin how Legambiente created its own self-certification scheme for a number of fruits and vegetables and animal products. The targets of the campaign are not restricted to the marketing of the products but also to increase producers' knowledge and awareness towards environmental issues, create public awareness of risks in food and stress the link between food-nature-health.

Matteo Sandon, showed how Bio Rekk, a regional Association born two years ago to promote local and ethical grew to in two years to supply 500 families with organic and Fair Trade box schemes. Bio Rekk is working with a local organic farmers'

cooperative shortening the distance between producers and consumers and delivering fresh food to its clients. But Bio Rekk is also working with schools and the community organising classes and event to promote ethical food and is meeting growing consumer demand and interest.

This is an example on the regional scale but on a larger scale we can find, for example in Belgium, the Wallon Association of Fruit Producers responsible for 10% of the national production of apples and pears and sole supplier of supermarket chain Delueze, one of the largest in Belgium. They have been applying IOBC- International Organisation for Biological Control guidelines for Integrated Production for almost 20 years and it has proven to be a winning choice, not only economically, but also socially and environmentally.

PAN Europe is currently preparing a new publication were these and more examples feature different strategies to pesticide use reduction undertaken by farmers, retailers and Governments in different European Countries.

Tomorrow we will continue to discuss private and governmental standards of Integrated Crop and Pest Management in our NGO workshop and the role of NGOs like PAN in this process. For today, I hope you have enjoyed the conference and that you can take valuable lessons home.

Last but not least I would like to thank the speakers SANA for hosting us here in Bologna and our organisation partners Legambiente and Italian Organic Farming Association.