IPMWORKS European Policy Seminar

Co-organised with Christophe Clergeau MEP

"Supporting farmers to reduce pesticides use through effective implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM)"

On 15th January 2025, the Horizon 2020 IPMWORKS project (*An EU-wide farm network demonstrating and promoting cost-effective IPM strategies*) will be co-organising with **Christophe Clergeau MEP,** a European Policy Seminar on **"Supporting farmers to reduce pesticides use through effective implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM)"**.

IPMWORKS (2020-2025) has built a dynamic network of demonstration farms, active in 16 European countries, sharing and promoting IPM practices with low pesticide use and high farm productivity and profitability.

Objectives of the Policy Seminar

Numerous research and empirical data across Europe demonstrate the potential of integrated pest management (IPM) and agroecological practices to reduce pesticide dependency, while increasing the overall resilience of farming systems and strengthening the financial sustainability of farms. Within the scope of the sustainable use of pesticides Directive (SUD), and the Farm to Fork Strategy of the European Green Deal, IPM is increasingly recognised as a key strategy to achieve sustainable agriculture and protect the environment.

After the decision by the European Commission to withdraw the SUR pesticides reduction proposal, IPM remains the key management practice in place to ensure the sustainable use of pesticides. IPM has the potential to enhance the sustainability of crop production, by applying long-term control strategies that combine biological, cultural and chemical methods, leading to a reduction in the harmful effects of agrochemicals on the environment, and lower economic costs for farmers.

The question remains whether the existing support and incentives for farmers (within the SUD) are sufficient to implement IPM in order to reach pesticides reduction targets widely across all agricultural crops and relevant sectors? And if not, what is needed to support the transition to a sustainable agricultural model based on low pesticides inputs.

This seminar will address how we can improve IPM agricultural extension and management practices to reduce pesticides use through the SUD. A Round Table on the future of IPM will be held at the end of the seminar which will assess if SUD and its present IPM practices will be sufficient to reach our pesticides reduction goals.

Programme

PHS (Paul-Henri Spaak) building, Room 5B1, European Parliament, Brussels

15:30 - 15:35	**INTRODUCTION Christophe Clergeau MEP (5 min)**
15:35 - 16:25	**A. Improving IPM agricultural extension and management practices to reduce pesticides use through the Sustainable Use Directive** (35 min) **DG SANTE, EC*** – Future measures to improve implementation of IPM in the SUD Directive **DG AGRI, EC*** – Supporting measures for farmers to meet reduction targets. **Christophe Clergeau MEP S&D, France** – The case for implementing IPM through the SUD or is there a need for more? **MEP EPP*,** AGRI committee – Implementing IPM through the SUD. * TBC (to be confirmed)

COPA-COGECA Chair of the Plant Health Working Party Pesticides group – How farmers are reducing pesticides use in farming practices.

Nicolas Munier-Jolain, INRAE/IPMWORKS – Delivering pesticides reduction through a holistic approach to IPM.

B. Can we boost IPM through basic IPM principles (35 min)

16.25 – 17.05

Moderated by Joaquín Balduque, CIHEAM Zaragoza/IPMWORKS

Shay Phelan TEAGASC (Ireland)/IPMWORKS – delivering on IPM management practices for farmers through **advisory and extension support**.

Karel Bolckmans IBMA* – What is needed to step up **Biocontrol** in open fields and extensive farming.

Eduardo Cuoco IFOAM – Agroecology* – on the path to zero pesticides use – how feasible is it for all agriculture and crop sectors?

Mark Ramsden, ADAS/IPMWORKS - **Improved digital decisions** for improved crop protection (DSSs tools).

Dr. Peter Hloben CEMA* Chairman of Crop Protection Equipment team – **effective and modern agricultural machinery for pesticides reduction** (1. machine technology alternatives to pesticides application equipment and 2. more efficient spraying equipment)

* TBC (to be confirmed)

16.45 – 17.25

C. Round Table on the future of IPM (40 min)

Moderation by Alun Jones, CIHEAM Zaragoza/IPMWORKS

DG SANTE
DG AGRI

MEP, EPP, AGRI*
MEP, Greens, ENVI & AGRI*
MEP, EPP, ENVI*
MEP, S&D, AGRI*
MEP, S&D, AGRI*
MEP RENEW, ENVI*

* TBC (to be confirmed)

17:25 - 17:30

Conclusions and next steps - **Christophe Clergeau MEP (5 min)**

Main messages from IPMWORKS

- Some pioneer farmers, including farmers engaged in the IPMWORKS network, are implementing holistic IPM (Integrated Pest Management), growing healthy crops **with a limited reliance on pesticides** (as compared to most European farms), **and good profitability at the farm level.**
  There are many scientific evidences (e.g. Lechenet et al., Nature Plants 2017)
- IPM allows to reduce drastically the reliance on pesticides, and is cost-effective, provided that it is implemented with a holistic approach, considering all **five pillars of holistic IPM**, namely
  1. **landscape** designed to reduce pest pressure,
  2. **cropping systems** designed to reduce pest pressure,
  3. the preferential use of **non-chemical pest control** solutions whenever possible,
  4. the **optimisation of decision making** to avoid unnecessary treatments, and
  5. the use of technologies allowing the **maximization of the efficiency of treatments** that are deemed necessary.
- IPMWORKS demonstrated **an approach to promote the development of holistic IPM,** based on peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, and hubs of 10-15 demo farms facilitated by a 'hub coach'. This approach proved to be efficient to promote IPM, and should be extended after the end of the H2020 project, with much more hubs of demo farms in all regions of EU. **Funding should be saved for supporting (i) the coordination of the network at the EU scale, and (ii) the functioning of each hub engaged locally under the IPMWORKS banner.**
- Holistic IPM is cost-effective, but complex to implement. The adoption of holistic IPM is currently relying on farmers' motivation (i.e., farmers' ecological awareness), because **there is currently no real economic incentive**. This is probably the reason why holistic IPM has been poorly adopted so far.
- The European Union should adopt **policies ensuring that IPM (and the target of reducing the reliance on pesticides) is not perceived any more by farmers as a constraint, but rather as an economic opportunity and a solution to protect European agriculture from the 'unfair' competition of non-European countries with lower environmental standards**. These policies should strengthen the market of products from farmers implementing holistic IPM, based on the full transparency regarding pesticide use, and labels engaging agri-food chains and consumers.