



# **Are crop and sector specific guidelines the best way forward for IPM?**

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# Who are Copa and Cogeca?

## **Copa – European farmers**

Bringing together 60 EU farmers' organisations

## **Cogeca – European agri-cooperatives**

Bringing together 35 EU agricultural cooperative organisations

- represents 13 million farmers and their families
- as well as around 38,000 cooperatives
- among the biggest and most active interest representations in Brussels

# Is IPM a new concept ?

IPM is not a new concept and but is based on good farming practice that has evolved over time

Its techniques are widely used all around the world

What is new in Europe is that following general IPM principles becomes mandatory for all farmers by 1 January 2014 as provided by the Framework Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides

# Common framework for integrated pest management (IPM)

## Directive 2009/128/EC (art.14)

Member States shall establish or support the establishment of necessary conditions for the implementation of integrated pest management. In particular, they shall **ensure that professional users have at their disposal information and tools** for pest monitoring and decision making, as well as advisory services on integrated pest management.

# What does IPM mean to European farmers and agricooperatives ?

There are many definitions of IPM e.g. FAO:

IPM means managing, in a given situation, populations of plant pests, diseases and weeds by the **combination of all appropriate agricultural practices** (preventive measures, cultural, mechanical, biological and chemical practices), with a **holistic approach** that reduces the impact of pests and damage to an acceptable level and at the same time ensures the protection of human health and the environment.

# Implementing IPM at farm level

IPM is an on-farm management tool which is implemented by the farmer

IPM is part of integrated crop management (ICM) and is advocated by farmers' organisations.

IPM/ICM are the cornerstone of sustainable farming systems, as long as both are based on **economic viability, social acceptance and environmental friendliness.**

**IPM is not about definitions but practical interpretation in the field taking into account economics, risks and labour costs.**

# What does IPM mean to European farmers and agricooperatives ?

As the FAO definition shows, the objective of IPM is not to minimise pesticide use, but to minimise the risks to human health and the environment.

The skills required for IPM are high and ensuring that qualified advice and extension services are available and accessible is important to allow support for the decision-making process.

Some of the measures for prevention and/or suppression of harmful organisms such as rotation, variety choice, sowing date and even planting density, are out of the control of the farmer as they are often dictated by the buyer.

**There must be market for the crop.**

## Important to remember

The market dictates a lot of the requirements which restricts the farmers options e.g. the market is usually looking for zero tolerance, on areas like skin quality, in the interest of product quality.

The economic threshold for certain products is often zero. The market allows no room for manoeuvre. Failure to meet this can result in a much lower price

Hence it is unfeasible to expect farmers to wait for even slight visual damages before spraying if it reduces crop value.

## Important to remember

Solutions for growers must be available at all times for all problems. This must be:

- A range of control options are needed.
- Resistance management is at risk due to the limited availability of PPPs on the market.
- The number of active substances available to farmers has fallen from over 1000 in 1991 to only around 400 actives currently authorised in the EU
- It is not just the number that is important but also a range of modes of action

**There is real concern for the implementation of IPM principles if tools are unavailable or missing. This could lead to distortion of competition at EU level and vis-à-vis third country imports**

# Crop and sector specific guidelines on IPM

**Defining general IPM principles and provision of general guidance is possible as long as these allow for adaptation to the specific situation and provide flexibility for site specific management decisions.**

Decisions on which tools to use must be made at farm level and not dictated by fixed rules.

IPM approach has to be adapted to the production system and can only be effective if the decision is made on the ground.

# Crop and sector specific guidelines on IPM

Guidelines may be difficult to use if they are impractical at the field level

**Measures suggested must be cost effective and not subject farmers to unnecessary additional paperwork**

**Farmers need regularly updated information on local best practice for each crop and for each pest**

# Crop and sector specific guidelines on IPM

The **role of National authorities** should be to **provide relevant information** and **not to approve specific rotations** or cultivation methods based on specific guidelines

A more practical approach is needed:

1. Demonstration trials and fields,
1. on-farm research and experimentation,
2. extension services,
3. practical applied research on preventive measures.

## (1) Conclusions

Farmers and growers rarely make the decision to use a crop protection product without first weighing up the various options available.

**IPM has to be economically sustainable. IPM needs to consider the economics of pest management and the economic viability of the crop, as the crop has to remain profitable.**

Squeezed economic margins for crop production are in conflict with the aims of the thematic strategy and the growers' priority to remain competitive.

## (2) Conclusions

Guideline must be developed together with farmers' organisations since farmers are the final users

**Guidelines are useful if practical, not restrictive, easily adaptable to the specific situation and provide flexibility for site specific management decisions**

Ensuring a common playing field at EU where farmers can compete with equal tools, while avoiding extra costs and distortion of competition;

As long as imports from third countries do not meet EU environmental, plant protection and consumer protection standards, this will further reduce the competitiveness of EU Farmers

# Copa-Cogeca: Defending and developing the European Model of Agriculture

THANK YOU !!!

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