

**Possible future SUD¹ policy options for feedback from
Advisory Group on the Food Chain and Animal and Plant Health members²**

- 1. IPM (integrated pest management): Do any changes need to be made to the current legal provisions for IPM in the sustainable use of pesticides Directive (SUD), including the IPM principles and should IPM record-keeping requirements be introduced in legislation ? should some minimum details be specified in legislation and other aspects be left to MS under subsidiarity, what to record, how to record (in what format and level of detail), when and how often to record, who records it, for how long should records be kept (paper and/or electronic form) trying not to be too burdensome while still representing a useful monitoring or enforcement tool for Member State competent authorities ? What are stakeholder experiences of MS already introducing national IPM record-keeping requirements (to which types of pesticide users should such requirements apply), do these records prove useful ? Other IPM aspects to be considered, some will take longer to develop and trial e.g. detailed crop-specific IPM criteria which are expected to be specific for different Member States**

Answer:

CropLife Europe supports the FAO definition of IPM³ and believes that it should remain as the cornerstone of the SUD. It is vital that farmers have access to a wide toolbox, including chemical solutions, biological solutions, biocontrol and agronomic practices, in order to ensure a practical and realistic approach that considers all aspects of sustainability and reflects the diversity of European agriculture and production systems. Agronomic realities faced by farmers in the South of Spain are different compared to the Eastern parts of Poland.

CropLife Europe believes that while there is always room for improvement concerning the implementation of IPM, the numerous examples at both national and regional level should be made available via a centralized database where access to such data would help paint a more realistic picture of the current status of IPM implementation at the EU, Member State, regional or even crop levels. Since the adoption of SUD in 2009, researchers, experts and specialists have put a lot of effort in developing a number of IPM programs and decision support systems which are now available to farmers (many with EU funds). This is a clear improvement as compared to the situation before the implementation of the Directive. These solutions should be further disseminated and exploited.

IPM strategies are specific not only to crops, but also to growing conditions and pest pressures that differ from one region to another or even within the same region between different cultivation areas. Hence, it is of utmost importance that the SUD continues to stimulate the work for the elaboration of IPM programs and develops new instruments and solutions to train farmers in implementing IPM. It also means that all duly authorised products are part of the farmers toolbox when it comes to defining IPM strategies.

¹ Sustainable use of pesticides Directive

² This is a non-exhaustive list of possible policy options. Advisory Group members are free to add proposals for extra policy options based on their experiences concerning implementation, application and enforcement of the SUD and how to better achieve the objectives of the SUD.

³ <http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/thematic-sitemap/theme/pests/ipm/more-ipm/en/>

We do not believe that adding further administrative burden for farmers is the right solution to ensuring better IPM implementation. Rather, it is important to monitor the up-take of IPM practices in the EU and appropriate indicators should be developed and data collected.

Finally, CropLife Europe believes that new crop protection solutions such as biopesticides but also digital and precision technologies will help to increase IPM implementation by offering EU farmers a much wider toolbox of solutions but also giving them access to technologies that will allow farmers to make better and more informed decisions when it comes to protecting their crops from pests and diseases. To that end, in September 2020, our industry launched its #2030 Commitments⁴, including investing €10b in digital and precision tools as well €4b in biopesticides but also committing to train 1 million farmers in the EU including on IPM by the year 2030. We call on the EC to consider including measures and enabling instruments meant to adapt IPM protocols to the use of these developing technologies.

2. **DRONES/AERIAL SPRAYING: Are changes needed to the current SUD regarding facilitating precision agriculture and particularly the use of drones for spraying, change the current SUD wording on aerial spraying ?** (use of drones to survey fields/crops is not prohibited)
If yes, what is the specific issue? Problems if plant protection products (PPPs) are not authorised for aerial spraying, lack of harmonised pesticide application equipment (PAE) standards or criteria to assess drones. What national experiences do stakeholders have in interpreting the current SUD legislative wording on drones or national MS authorisations on the use of drones for spraying

Answer:

In the current SUD, there is no mention of precision agriculture, digital agriculture or technologies in any capacity. CropLife Europe believes that the current revision of the SUD is an excellent opportunity for the Commission to encourage and enable the uptake of new and innovative tools such as precision and digital technologies. However, in order for EU farmers to take up these technologies, European legislation, including the SUD, must act as a vehicle that enables, promotes, and rewards their uptake. Unfortunately, the current Commission legal interpretation of drones is that they are considered aerial application- and are therefore prohibited. This needs to be reviewed in the revised SUD.

CropLife Europe recommends that the revised SUD stipulates a clear differentiation in the definition of drones for pesticide application in comparison with conventional aerial application, to this end the legislative solution should not necessarily focus on the means of application, but rather on parameters to ensure proper protection of the adjacent environment (drift, run-off, etc). Furthermore, while data is being generated, a separate annex in the legislation should be created and addressed once more data about the safety of drones has been generated. In addition, CropLife Europe recommends that the Commission create a multi-stakeholder platform in order to exchange on the matter and provide Member States with a harmonized set of guidelines on the generation of data on the use, safety and benefits of drone applications. We believe that drones should be considered as an additional application tool available to European farmers, both conventional and

⁴ <https://croplifeurope.eu/commitments/2030-commitments/>

organic, and included as a new application method for PPP registrations in accordance with EC Regulation 1107/2009.

Finally, we understand that the OECD has created a subgroup on drones where its main task is to develop recommendations on the possible data requirements to support pesticide application by drones and that a recommendation expected to be completed by mid-2021. Furthermore, it is our understanding that in addition to recommendations for the generation of data, a key issue discussed in the subgroup concerns finding a suitable definition of drones as an application technology in relation to aerial spray application, including the development of a practical and suitable future regulatory framework. CropLife Europe supports the need for such a discussion, not just at the OECD, but at the European Union level. We are pleased that the European Commission is a member and actively participates in this subgroup. CropLife Europe encourages the Commission to take under advisement the OECD recommendations when made available, including consideration within the scope of the revised Sustainable Use Directive where appropriate.

3. **TESTING OF PAE: Any need for changes to the current system for testing PAE outlined in the SUD ?** Need for harmonised standards and criteria, potentially reduce the testing requirements for basic and less risky PAE, more frequent testing for contractors/large scale users? Mandatory test before first placing on the market? assistance to train testers and facilitate mobile testing services to cover larger geographical areas ?

Answer:

CropLife Europe encourages the EC to drive the harmonization of application technology standards across the EU and work with MS to ensure control of compliance.

As stated in the answer to the question on drones, CropLife Europe encourages the EC to create a multi-stakeholder platform where Member States are provided guidance on the generation of data concerning the use and safety benefits of all types of precision application equipment. Such a platform could be led by the MS and include participants from industry, machinery producers and other experts in the development of protocols and guidance for the generation of such data.

4. **POSSIBLE LEGISLATIVE SIMPLIFICATION/REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN: Can some elements of the SUD be simplified to reduce the admin burden for MS and stakeholders ?** suggestion that more structure on IPM annex/ guidance is needed, any change needed to the requirements on training and advisory services or they are currently working quite well ? A suggestion to possibly reduce the testing requirements for simpler and less risky PAE ?

Answer :

The Directive should further create opportunities for training and improve access of farmers to advisory services, as for example through a dedicated smartphone applications or other online access to information and training. Improving the knowledge on the sustainable use of pesticides, being conventional or biopesticides, should be a key objective for the directive. In addition to safety and appropriate use aspects, as previously mentioned, access to IPM protocols is key.

5. **COLOUR CODED LABELLING OF PPP PRODUCTS: Is it worth considering a “traffic light” colour coding label or sticker on the PPP package (green, amber, red) to indicate varying hazard for health and environment to users, sellers and purchasers of the PPPS ?** can an attempt be made to objectively divide PPPs into 3 such groups or even 2 groups of the most hazardous and least hazardous products, do any stakeholders have an experience of implementing such a scheme or similar in other fields ?

Answer:

CropLife Europe believes that colour coded labelling of PPP products undermines the entire risk assessment system which is built on the premises that product uses approval is only possible if they present a high level of safety. On that basis, the potential impact is not given by the hazard properties of a substance or a product. In addition, it would in essence correspond to a double labelling of the product and add an extra level of complexity for end-users. Labels have considerably improved over time so that to provide precise instructions of use, a complete list of advice and safety precautions phrases to users so that to ensure that the high level of safety that (EC) Regulation no 1107/2009 provides is actually reached. Labels are the vehicle through which the corresponding highest level of risk management is achieved, which is not what a hazard-based colour code is trying to achieve.

CropLife Europe does not believe that such an approach would be suitable as the actual need in pest/weed/disease control will vary depending on crops/regions/farming practices. Selection of products would need to be based on a sound assessment at field level of the actual need according to IPM recommendations. The differentiation of products and their properties should be nevertheless adequately addressed during the regular training end users will follow anyway.

Such an approach is too simplistic, and could also create detrimental effects in terms of delivering proper safety information (e.g. a green light product label being skipped by the end user or used with a higher dose). A colour-coded system will arbitrarily place products in categories suggesting wrongly that for certain products no use precautions are needed. Such an approach does not provide any useful information to the end user to support when selecting the most suitable treatment for the pest or disease they are facing in their crop.

6. **RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF SOME PPPs: Potentially restrict/ prohibit the use of some more hazardous pesticides by all or some users: different categories of agricultural, non-agricultural, professional and non-professional users ?** Are certain exceptions needed, for example for some sports facilities or other areas ? Which pesticides should have their use restricted and for which uses and users, is there a minimum baseline which could be applied in all MS ?

Answer:

CropLife Europe would welcome any changes in the SUD that would lead to a more harmonized approach for exposure assessments of products for non-agricultural and amateur uses. We believe that products for which an evaluation at European or National level has not concluded into any unacceptable risk when used in professional crops i.e. in larger surfaces than for typical amateur uses

should not be subject to additional evaluations or arbitrary restrictions, taking into account that considerations regarding the use by non-professionals is usually well addressed by ready to use packaging and safe-delivery systems. CropLife Europe is concerned that a lack of a harmonized approach for risk assessments including methodologies for non-agricultural uses, compounded by a lack of acknowledgement of existing ongoing product stewardship activities, leads to increased arbitrary bans at MS level. Such actions also unfortunately drive users to use illegal or homemade products leading to potential higher risks for human health and the environment. Lower efficacy and/or lower selectivity of products used can have negative effects on biodiversity.

Concerning reducing the risks of products used for amateur or non-agricultural uses, CropLife Europe proposes to limit the quantity of product to cover 1000m² per pack or to adjust the size of the packs to a volume or weight to one which can be reasonably used up within two seasons. In addition, we recommend that ready to use sprays have safety mechanisms such as on/off switches, while liquid concentrate products, powders and granules should be equipped with measuring cups or some other equivalent measuring mechanism. We would also recommend that at a country levels restrictions should be placed on bulk buying offers e.g. no two for one offers. In several countries with lower average incomes, and large rural communities and smaller exploitation areas, amateur uses are also important to secure food supply (contrary to more western countries use patterns).

7. **ANY EXTRA INFORMATION OR COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES NEEDED: Should any extra information or communication measures be included in the SUD ?** any need to improve the information to the general public or residents when pesticides are used or planned to be used in their local area, any stakeholder views or experiences on this ?

Answer:

CropLife Europe believes that Member States as well as regional and local governments should increase balanced communication activities towards the general public concerning the actual risks and impacts of pesticides, avoiding misinformation and fearmongering campaigns. European policymakers have repeatedly acknowledged that the regulatory system for approving plant protection products in Europe is the strictest and most rigorous in the world. Nevertheless, this reality is not at all reflected in the general attitudes of the public concerning the perceived risks and impact of pesticide use or their residues in food, which rather reflect a pre-regulated and pre-technological era.

The Directive should create the environment for appropriate information highlighting IPM initiatives and also on benefits (and potential risks of not using PPPs in certain situations) of pesticides, including by underlying the rigorous safety assessments performed to ensure that the produce consumed by European consumers is, safe, affordable and of high quality.

CropLife Europe believes that more communication activities geared toward the public are needed, at the National, local and EU levels as to why pesticides are used in both conventional and organic agriculture. Pesticides, whether of chemical or natural origin, are used by farmers to protect their crops from pests and disease. They are a vital and necessary tool for farmers to ensure their competitiveness and main food security for nearly half a billion EU consumers. The FAO estimates up

to 40% crops are lost annually to pests and disease which represents a loss to all the services that the corresponding cultivated ecosystems are expected to provide.

8. **POTENTIAL HIGHER TAXATION OF MORE HAZARDOUS PESTICIDES: Should a higher VAT tax rate or an environmental/excise tax be applied to some more hazardous chemical pesticides/candidates for substitution and/or a lower tax rate to less hazardous or biological products, if so which pesticides and which tax rate would effectively incentivise or disincentivise their use ?** (their use would not be prohibited and use of the more hazardous pesticides will likely be needed from time to time to avoid crop resistance issues). Some MS currently applying such taxes nationally redirect the funds generated into the agricultural sector or research activities but a decision on using any funds generated is a national competence at MS level. The principle of fiscal neutrality should also be taken into account, should a higher tax on pesticides be compensated for by a lower tax on others so that the overall tax revenue generated is the same

Answer:

CropLife Europe does not support levying a higher VAT tax rate or an environmental/excise tax on pesticides that are considered to be hazardous or those that are candidates for substitution. Such an approach would not take into account the actual uses of the pesticides, the crop and regional specific IPM recommendations or the risk mitigation measures taken. In other words, such a tax would solely be based on the potential hazard of a substance which is not representative of its actual risks and impacts. In order for products to be used by farmers, they must go through a rigorous approval process that demonstrates that they not pose any unacceptable risk to humans or the environment. Moving away from such a scientific approach would undermine the credibility of the whole risk assessment process. Furthermore, CropLife Europe believes that such a tax could lead to farmers increasing the use of illegal and or counterfeit pesticides.

As an example, CropLife Europe would like to underline that copper-sulphate is a vital tool used in organic farming to which there is currently no viable alternative. Levying a tax on this substance (currently a candidate for substitution) would run counter to one of the EC's F2F and Biodiversity Strategies, i.e. increasing EU area farmed under organic agriculture to 25% by adding an additional financial burden for organic farmers. Furthermore, a key driver that encourages conventional farmers to shift to organic production is the increased profit margin. Adding such an additional financial burden, and thus eradicating the difference in profit margins, would discourage conventional farmers from converting their farms to organic.

European farmers make on average less than 50% of the average income compared to other economic sectors. The current pandemic has not helped this situation and has created additional uncertainty for the financial perspectives of EU producers. With its Green Deal Communication launched in May 2020, the EC announced that they expect farmers to comply with even more stringent production standards, further putting them at a competitive disadvantage vis a vis their trading partners. Imposing an additional financial burden via additional taxes will put EU farmers on an even more uneven playing field by further shrinking the tools available for farmers to protect their crops from pests, undesirable weeds and disease. Moreover, EU farmers are continuing to lose access to crop protection tools, while the approval process for alternatives such as substances of natural origin are placed on the market at

slow pace while innovative technologies such as new breeding techniques remain unavailable for use by EU farmers.

9. **PRESCRIPTION SYSTEM FOR SOME PPPs: Should a prescription system be considered for some more hazardous chemical pesticides (perhaps also some candidates for substitutions) used by professional PPP users ?** if so for which pesticides, who would issue the prescription (a recording or registration system would likely be needed, paper and/or electronic prescriptions, for how long would a prescription be valid, how to deal with repeat prescriptions for the same issue and product, possible extra costs and administrative burden for farmers, advisers and competent authorities, who would need to keep copies of the prescription: the farmer/user, adviser/prescriber, seller, would some minimum qualifications or training be needed to issue prescriptions, for how long would prescriptions need to be kept to be available for inspection or controls, what is the experience of stakeholders in MS such as Greece and Hungary who have already introduced such a prescription system, did it impact significantly on PPP use or impose extra costs and administrative burden on stakeholders and industry ?

Answer:

A refined SUD should focus on better implementation of IPM rather than setting up additional systems with additional administrative burdens.

Nevertheless, CropLife Europe acknowledges that a prescription model could be successful in certain clearly defined circumstances, however it does not believe that at this moment such an approach would be appropriate at EU wide level. Such a strategy could be especially difficult to implement for smaller countries where the amount of trained agronomics/advisors (who would be giving the prescriptions) would be inadequate in comparison to the number of professional farmers and therefore users of pesticides.

As an alternative to such an approach, CropLife Europe recommends that the European Commission and Member States look to harness the potential of digital technologies. CropLife Europe is currently exploring the development of a tool that would create a “digital twin” of pesticide use by farmers. We believe that such an approach would not only ensure better recording data on pesticide use, but also alleviate the administrative burden that a prescription model may have for all stakeholders concerned.

10. **HOW TO IMPROVE MONITORING OF PESTICIDES’ EFFECTS ON HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Should the SUD include extra details on monitoring the effects of pesticides on human health and the environment ?** if so which ones, how to improve cooperation and collaboration with human health colleagues (might not be achieved via a legislative change) ? **Would this require changing / making SUD clearer?**

Answer:

Human Health

CropLife Europe would like to underline that the crop protection industry complies extensively with the adverse effects of reporting based on article 56 of (EC) Regulation 1107/2009. We do not believe that the revised SUD should incorporate any additional elements for monitoring the effects on human health as there is already a requirement for Member States to have such systems. Monitoring should, as it is today, be called for in specific cases and aim at further demonstrating the considerable progress made at reducing exposure through modern application techniques and stewardship. Our industry is willing to continue to support MS to finetune and improve such systems at the MS level, including by sharing and exchanging data with the competent authorities.

Furthermore, CropLife Europe would recommend the creation of a platform for MS to exchange information on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) in order to ensure a high standard of information exchange on human health protection across the food chain.

Finally, CropLife Europe would like to point out that as part of our #2030 Commitments, our industry has committed to make Closed Transfer Systems (CTS) available to all farmers by 2030. CTS allow PPPs to be directly transferred from the container to the spray tank and also allow farmers and operators to accurately measure the volume of product being transferred. CTS will significantly reduce operator exposure and environmental risks from splashing or spilling of pesticides. In addition, our industry has also committed to training 1 million farmers, advisors and multipliers by 2030 in various BMPs and GAPs such as IPM, water protection as well as the promotion and importance of wearing personal protective equipment (PPE)⁵.

Environment

CropLife Europe believes that the SUD revision represents an opportunity to strengthen official advisory and control systems, as well as stewardship approaches, and reduce losses of PPPs to water through widespread implementation of innovative technology and techniques. This should focus on operator training on Best Management Practices (BMPs) and increased uptake of enabling technologies, farm infrastructure, and landscape measures. The TOPPS/ CleanWaters project already provides detailed information to address point and diffuse pollution pathways. Furthermore, CropLife Europe strongly encourages the EC to ensure that suitable cross-references are made to existing EU Water policy, in particular on the establishment of water protection HRIs in the revised SUD, focussed on:

- Existing EU-wide monitoring of compliance of pesticides with surface water, ground water, and drinking water standards in the EU
- New activity-based indicators on implementation of water protection measures e.g. low drift nozzles, clean water tanks, sprayer cleaning areas, and vegetative riparian buffer strips.

11. **RECYCLING/SAFE DISPOSAL OF EMPTY PPP CONTAINERS:** Should any extra measures be taken to increase the recycling and safe disposal of empty pesticide containers or this should be left to industry and MS to manage ? for example a possible refundable deposit on products purchased if the empty container is returned to the point of purchase, how to deal with online purchases, problem of long distances/sparsely populated areas, return the empty container to

⁵ <https://croplifeurope.eu/commitments/2030-commitments/protecting-people/>

point of purchase or bring to a collection point or have a farm collection system, some MS have collection systems also for other waste such as general farm plastics, does the Commission need to act or take action to support the recycling and safe disposal of empty pesticide containers ?

Answer

As part of our #2030 commitments, our industry has committed to continue expanding our empty PPP container collection schemes by ensuring that all EU MS have empty packaging collection schemes and to achieve an average collection rate of 75% in the EU⁶.

Concerning refundable deposit schemes, our industry has attempted such an approach whilst setting up a collection scheme in Greece. We eventually have come to the conclusion this is not the most efficient incentive in order to increase the collection of pesticide packaging for the following reasons:

- **Refundable deposit schemes create a risk of exposure for informal waste pickers that could offer their "collection service" to farmers to earn from the deposits**
- **Counting bottles for deposit would create a risk of exposure for the operators. Thus, the deposit that is collected per bottle unit should be redeemed on a weight basis, which could raise mistrust from farmers**
- **Refundable deposit schemes generate a very high administrative burden and costs on the collection system and on the retailers. In addition, they have been proven to be very expensive for small-scale collection schemes that collect small packages**
- **Collection schemes in place for quite some time already have a very high collection rate, some over 90% even. A refundable deposit scheme would only improve this figure marginally while at the same time add significant administrative burden and costs on the systems.**

Concerning returns of empty PPP packaging that experience problems of long distances and are sparsely populated, CropLife Europe believes that the most cost and environmental efficient way to collect empty packaging from farmers is to have the retailers and distributors (including those involved with product delivery at the farms) involved in the collection scheme. Farmers could then return their empty packaging when they purchase new products. A Take-back obligation is now the norm for many sectors in Europe (home electronic devices, fridges, batteries, tires, etc.). MS should consider schemes if necessary.

Finally, DG ENVI, with the involvement of stakeholders, is currently drafting an EU strategy for non-packaging agriculture plastics. In several MS (e.g. France, Germany, Sweden, etc.), these plastics are already collected by the same organizations that collect the empty pesticide packages waste. Similar synergies could also be investigated for other MS. Authorities at the national level could facilitate this work by convincing all stakeholders to take their fair share of responsibility for their plastics and by eliminating regulatory barriers that impede current organizations dealing with pesticide packaging to collect non-packaging agricultural plastic wastes.

⁶ <https://croplifeurope.eu/commitments/2030-commitments/circular-economy/>

12. IMPROVING EFFECTIVENESS OF MS national action plans (NAPs): Can MS SUD national action plans be made into more effective implementation and communication tools, how to involve stakeholders and link with Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) national strategic plans ? should they be made more prescriptive, be updated more frequently? Be better linked to the CAP and other relevant plans (Water Framework Directive, Natura 2000)? Would this require changing / making SUD clearer? If yes, in what way?

Answer:

Effectiveness of the MS NAPs can be improved through the allocation of the right resources for their implementation. The SUD should create an enabling environment for the MS to allocate financial resources for practical and cost-effective measures that have the potential to produce the widest impact in reducing the risk of pesticide use (training, awareness raising, communication, inspection of application equipment, precision farming, etc.) The policy solutions for the future SUD should move away from a strict restriction-based approach.

13. (LEGALLY BINDING) TARGETS TO REDUCE USE AND RISK OF PESTICIDES: What are stakeholder experiences or views on (national) quantitative pesticide use/risk reduction targets or similar targets in other areas such as antimicrobial resistance/antibiotic use for example ? have these been put into legislation or NAPs, have they been successful or not, what have been the follow-up actions at national level if the targets are not achieved or progress is insufficient: support, penalties ? should the Farm to Fork strategy targets be made legally applicable in individual MS or at EU level globally, how to take account of those MS who have already achieved significant reductions in the use/risk of pesticides nationally, can they be rewarded or acknowledged for such existing progress as regards these targets ?

Answer:

CropLife Europe is open to discussing objective reduction targets for the risk and use of pesticides that are practical, realistic, science based and preceded by a comprehensive impact assessment, for any legally binding reduction targets as per the EC's "Better Regulation Guidelines"⁷. This approach is also shared by the European Council as outlined in their conclusions on Farm 2 Fork in October 2020.

We believe that it is crucial for Member States to set, measure and implement their own targets for the reduction of the use and risk of pesticides. Several Member States have already successfully implemented numerous initiatives designed to reduce the risk and use of pesticides. All such initiatives and the positive learnings from their success should be taken into account. Furthermore, reduction targets for pesticides are not a novel idea. CropLife Europe encourages the EC to look into past experiences where Member States have tried this approach and learn from its shortcomings. European agriculture is complex and has a broad range of production models, climatic conditions and agronomic challenges (ie. rainfall, temperature, pest and disease pressures, etc.) Trade-offs such as land use efficiency and CO2 emissions must also be taken into account.

⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines-impact-assessment.pdf>

Finally, CropLife Europe believes that any consideration of reduction targets must be complemented by an increase in the acceptance of innovation and new technologies and an enabling framework for doing so. Farmers will need to be able to access a broader crop protection toolbox, including biopesticides as well as precision and digital tools as these may play a significant role to help reach the use and risk reduction targets for pesticides. We therefore ask the Commission to embrace a regulatory system that is quicker, more flexible, and enables the development as well as availability of new and innovative technologies and tools in order to replenish the farmer's toolbox that will have a beneficial impact for EU agriculture and the environment.

14. **(HARMONISED) RISK INDICATORS: Any suggestions for potential new (harmonised) risk indicators that should be investigated or developed by the Commission, preferably that could be easily and quickly developed ? do MS/stakeholders already use other indicators or some are currently under development ?**

Answer:

CropLife Europe sees Harmonized Risk Indicator (HRI) 1 as a reasonable tool to measure the risk and use of pesticides. Over the past 2 years, the EC has published HRI trends for the EU, which according to HRI 1, shows a decrease in the risk and use of pesticides by about 20%. Nevertheless, we call on the EC to improve existing HRIs and develop additional indicators that take into account the specific agronomic situations in EU members states as well as overall agricultural productivity and competitiveness. Further information describing the additional proposed indicators can be found in Annex 1 of this document. In a general sense, CropLife Europe believes that indicators should include but not be limited to:

- Agronomic conditions
- Agricultural productivity / land-use efficiency
- Uptake of IPM
- Water protection and quality
- Consumer, operator and environmental safety

By adding complementary HRIs, the EC would be able to gather further data reflecting the uptake of measures further improving safety as for example the number of farmer training, use of PPE, the implementation of empty pesticide container collection schemes, as well as the number of innovative application equipment being used such as low drift nozzles or closed transfer systems.

CropLife Europe supports the EC's call to refine the methodology used to calculate HRI 2. The current methodology of the indicator only measures risk by counting the number of derogations granted. Reasons for derogations are manifold including delays for product authorizations and/or lack of mutual recognition. HRI 2 does not, however, take into account the context in which an emergency use decision was granted such as the emergency nature itself through specific agronomic necessities, which is the cornerstone of the SUD, nor does it reflect the associated risk mitigation measures. In essence, the number of emergency use derogations is not an indicator for human or environmental risk of pesticide use, since the labelling and precautionary measures do apply as for all registrations. The indicator rather reflects agronomic pest pressure that remain uncovered by a registered solution,

would that solution be under evaluation by an authority or uncovered by available tools, and thus become emergencies.

15. **COHERENCE/COMPLEMENTARITY OF THE SUD WITH OTHER EU LEGISLATION OR POLICIES: Any areas of contradiction between different EU policies that should be investigated or resolved ?**
e.g. buffer zone requirements applying under the CAP and for individual PPPs, much concern was expressed in public feedback on the evaluation roadmap and inception impact assessment as regards buffer zones from houses and water courses when spraying pesticides.

Answer:

CropLife Europe believes that the Commission could explore the possibilities in creating synergies between the certain elements of the Common Agricultural Policy and the SUD. This could be done for example, by fostering innovation and incentivizing the modernization of agricultural production via the uptake of digital and precision tools as well as more resource efficient and sustainable pesticide application technologies. These technologies are valuable tools towards achieving use optimization and further reducing the risks and impacts of pesticide use.

CropLife Europe believes that the Commission should also encourage Members States and farmers to embrace the enormous advantages of digitalization in the agricultural sector. This will allow farmers to make better-informed crop protection decisions leading to a more sustainable food production model whilst supporting the goals of the SUD.

The new CAP foresees the establishment of mandatory Farm Advisory Services (FAS) at National level for farmers. CropLife Europe supports the creation of the FASs and proposes that IPM as well as other best practices on the sustainable use of pesticides should mandatory elements of such programs to offered for all growers. Farmers should be offered a bonus top up payment for completing IPM training.

Annex 1 of the Strategic Plans Regulation (SPR) outlines proposed indicators to be used in order to measure MS compliance concerning specific objectives of the CAP. The indicator proposes measuring the Utilized Agricultural Area (UAV) per MS where specific actions or commitments are being implemented to reduce the risk of pesticide use. CropLife Europe supports the use of such indicators and proposes to expand the general indicator to also include the number of farmers trained relative to the UAV.

Annex 1- Complementary Indicators

Agronomic Conditions and Agricultural Productivity

- Pest and disease pressure at member state and/or regional levels that impact changes in yield
- Number of crop-pest combinations where available pesticides and/or resistance to pesticides makes effective pest control unsatisfactory.
- Productivity (yield/crop/ha) to monitor the land-use efficiency at member state and/or regional level
- % Reduction in production and area sown of corps due to pest pressure which can't be controlled by registered solutions

Uptake of IPM

- IPM uptake including agricultural area covered at MS level

Water Protection and Quality

- Number of farmsteads equipped with dedicated loading and washing places with water retention system for spray machinery (% of total) as well as suitable remnant management systems/services (% of total)
- Number of low drift nozzles and other drift reducing equipment sold and percentage of agricultural area covered at MS level
- Percentage of water bodies or sampling sites of drinking, surface and groundwater (separate assessment for each type) that are compliant with the quality standards set by the Water Framework Directive
- Spray machinery being equipped with clean water tanks to enable cleaning in the field (% of total)
- Spray machinery being inspected and compliant with EU regulation (% of total)

Consumer, Operator and Environmental Safety

- Establishment of collection systems for empty pesticide containers and collection rate at MS level
- Percentage of residue samples that are compliant with the MRL Regulation
- Farmer and operator trainings and certifications in safe and sustainable use of pesticides (% of total) including agricultural area covered at MS level
- Number of closed transfer systems sold and percentage of agricultural area covered
- Establishment of phytopharmaceutical monitoring schemes that are able to provide sufficient and accurate data on consumer, operator and environmental safety with regard to pesticide use at MS level
- Phytopharmaceutical monitoring data showing significant and proven adverse effects of pesticides on human health or the environment (% of total measurements, or absolute numbers per 1 million inhabitants)