

MEETING WITH COPA-COGECA

January 14 2022, 11.30-13.00 CET

Weblink

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Main messages

Topic #1 SUD revision and F2F pesticide targets

- Reduction by 50 % in the use and risk of chemical pesticides and the use of more hazardous pesticides **is a main goal** of the Farm to Fork Strategy.
- The revision of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD) will be crucial to achieving the Farm to Fork targets. We are working to an ambitious timeline, **but are still on track**. We are aiming to deliver a **legislative proposal in March 2022**.
- **Farmers have a key role to play in the transition to sustainable food systems**. The SUD revision is based on extensive stakeholder consultations, and a detailed impact assessment (ongoing) to ensure we get the balance right.
- The **input of COPA-COGECA has been crucial to the SUD revision to date**.
- The **issues raised by COPA-COGECA have been listened to and are being taken into account** including on: the need for alternatives, the need for a safe, effective and affordable toolbox for farmers, the need for Member States' differing starting points to be taken into account, the need for financial support under CAP; the need for research into alternatives; and the need to support the development of new technologies.
- **COPA-COGECA's pro-active approach to the consultation on SUD has been very valuable**. I look forward to continuing our work together throughout the process.
- **Are there ways we can improve our work together on the SUD revision?**

[To note, following exchanges with DG SANTE, COPA-COGECA did participate as a panellist in the session on pesticides at the Farm to Fork conference – putting the farmers' important perspective at the centre of that debate ([REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Phytosanitary Questions group, Copa-Cogeca).]

Steering note for the Deputy Director General

Description of the agenda, the topics to be discussed and the context

On Friday January 14th 2022, you will meet with [REDACTED], [REDACTED] COPA-COGECA Europe's strongest farming representative organisation, to discuss how best to put the emphasis on farmers as part of the solution on sustainable food and how SANTE and COPA-COGECA can work together to make that happen.

This discussion comes, following an email from [REDACTED] (see below), in which he expresses disappointment that the wrap up video of the 2021 Farm to Fork Conference, has no farming representative. He suggests that while on Farm to Fork.....'all EU policy initiatives will materialise in a combined way for the farmer action, farmers were branded either industrial businesses or some sort of lifestyle people.' [REDACTED] asks 'Would it not be fair to ask for some support and collaboration to make things happen?'

The meeting will focus on files which will be coming into the spotlight on the coming months- sustainable use of pesticides, feed additives, framework for sustainable food systems and animal welfare.

To note, following exchanges with DG SANTE, COPA-COGECA did participate as a panellist in the session on pesticides at the Farm to Fork conference. ([REDACTED], [REDACTED] Phytosanitary Questions group, Copa-Cogeca). For D1 to add on farmers' overall representation elsewhere in the F2F conference, for example [REDACTED], CEJA [REDACTED] (European Council of Young Farmers) was a speaker in the session on 'Sustainable Business Models'.

From: [REDACTED]@copa-cogeca.eu>

Sent: Friday, October 22, 2021 10:57 AM

To: [REDACTED] (SANTE) [REDACTED]@ec.europa.eu>

Subject: FW: Farm to Fork 2021 - Thank you!

Dear [REDACTED], dear [REDACTED],

Thank you very much for the opportunity to take part in the Farm to Fork Conference!

I watched the highlights of the event. A lot of talk about food, food chain, and how things must change. But no farming representative. Politicians, civil servants and stakeholders that have publicly questioned our EU farming sector. And I do not mean that they should have been Copa or Cogeca as such. After the media blast on F2F where we only asked for the tools, how to make it success at farm level where all EU policy initiatives will materialise in a combined way for the farmer action, farmers were branded either industrial businesses or some sort of lifestyle people. In DG SANTE, after all the successful work that we have done in our sustainability, safety, and alignment with EU level policies, is this what we get from you? Frankly, after 25 years of working with your teams, I am truly disappointed. How much more commitment you ask? Would it not be fair to ask for some support and collaboration to make things happen?

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

Topic #1

Lines to take

- Reduction by 50 % in the use and risk of chemical pesticides and the use of more hazardous pesticides **is a main goal** of the Farm to Fork Strategy.
- The revision of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD) will be crucial to achieving the Farm to Fork targets. We are working to an ambitious timeline, **but are still on track**. We are aiming to deliver a **legislative proposal in March 2022**.
- **Farmers have a key role to play in the transition to sustainable food systems**. The SUD revision is being based on extensive stakeholder consultation, and a detailed impact assessment (ongoing) to ensure we get the balance right.
- **The input of COPA-COGECA has been crucial to the SUD revision to date.**
- **The issues raised by COPA-COGECA have been listened to and are being taken into account**, including on: the need for alternatives, the need for a safe, effective and affordable toolbox for farmers, the need for Member States' differing starting points to be taken into account, the need for financial support under CAP; the need for research into alternatives; and the need to support the development of new technologies.
- COPA-COGECA's pro-active approach to the consultation on SUD has been very valuable. I look forward to continuing our work together throughout the process.
- **Are there ways we can improve our work together on the SUD revision?**
[Key elements of the SUD revision]
- As a priority, the SUD revision will **enhance provisions on integrated pest management** and promote greater use of **safe alternative ways of protecting harvests from pests and diseases**.
- In the SUD revision, consideration is being given to whether the **targets** for pesticides should be made mandatory at Member State and/or EU level.
- Stress that the work on the SUD review **does not take place in isolation**. Intensive work is ongoing on many parallel and related files, such as the **Common Agricultural Policy**, the Biodiversity Strategy, **measures to improve the placing of low risk pesticides** on the market, the Organic Action Plan and **Horizon Europe research and technical support**. All of these actions will support the delivery of the Farm to Fork pesticide reduction targets.
- In particular, the Common Agricultural Policy will remain a key tool to support farmers in the transition to sustainable food systems, while ensuring a decent living for them.

State of play/background information

COPA-COGECA'S PRIORITIES IN RELATION TO FARM TO FORK PESTICIDE REDUCTION TARGETS AND SUD REVISION

Key messages delivered by Copa-Cogeca at Farm to Fork conference, 14-15th October 2021 - panel discussion on reducing pesticide use and risk

COPA-COGECA representing famers and agri-cooperatives in the EU

- Our agri-food sector makes the EU one of the world's leaders in producing food, guaranteeing food security and providing millions of jobs to Europeans.
- Farmers' day-to-day work involves providing safe food, feed and non-food agricultural products and safeguarding the environment.
- At farm level, it **makes sense to know what the combined impact** we would see from all these new targets coming under the umbrella of the Green Deal.
- In combination with alternative agricultural measures and technologies, **chemical pesticides may support high quality agricultural production** and they **will play a key role even in the future implementation of IPM.**
- To provide consumers with high quality, nutritious and safe food, European farmers and agri-cooperatives should be equipped with the **right, safe, effective and affordable toolbox** which should be developed hand in hand with cutting-edge scientific progress.

Other key issues normally emphasised by COPA-COGECA:

- **Member States different starting points:** As every Member State has different types of farming systems and challenges, therefore they should be the ones to decide about the path and pace to meet the requirements of the Commission.
- **New technologies:** Legislation needs to be adapted to allow for the development and implementation of innovative technologies.
- **Drone use:** The use of drones should be regulated at EU level, harmonising legislation among the Member States.
- **Alternatives:** Currently, alternative pest management solutions to chemicals are not enough.
- **Need further science based research and the development of alternatives** for their application through IPM schemes. Crucial **that investments** keep going into this area to bring to the market affordable, effective and safe plant protection products.
- **Registration costs:** Need to reduce the registration costs for low risk substances.

REVISION OF SUD – TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

The Commission is moving ahead swiftly with the revision of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD). It will be crucial to achieving the key targets in the Farm to Fork Strategy, notably a reduction by 50% of the use and risk of chemical pesticides based on the already published harmonised risk indicator 1 and the use of more hazardous pesticides, the so-called candidates for substitution, by 50% by 2030.

Since the 1st stakeholder conference Jan 19th 2021, key steps in the revision of SUD include:

- The Commission has **consulted Member State competent authorities** on possible policy options , via the SUD Working Group
- **Stakeholders were consulted** Feb. 2021 via Advisory Group on the Food Chain and Animal and Plant Health, 12 organisations responded
- 29 March 2021: Commission signed a contract for a **6 month Foresight study** aiming to develop future vision scenarios on the sustainable use of pesticides, including on how the Farm to Fork Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy pesticide use and risk reduction targets can be achieved by 2030
- April 2021: European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) section adopted its planned **information report input** to SUD evaluation
- **The main external study supporting the evaluation and impact assessment continues** its work: a workshop to discuss findings of its evaluation work took place on 4 May
- **Online public consultation/have your say** concluded in April: approx. 1,700 responses received and are still being analysed
- A **second stakeholder event** was organised in June 2021, in cooperation with PT Council Presidency (as well as the first stakeholder event in January)
- A **third Commission stakeholder event** took place on October 5th 2021

Next steps with SUD evaluation and impact assessment:

- The **evaluation to a large extent concludes in Q2 2021** but the Commission can still take account of data becoming available after this
- The **impact assessment of planned revision of SUD to conclude in Q4 2021**
- The Commission aims to **adopt its legislative proposal in Q1 2022**

In more detail.

Steps, October-November 2021

- Conclusion of external study supporting the SUD evaluation and impact assessment
- Conclusion of Foresight study on future vision scenarios on the sustainable use of pesticides
- Preparation of draft Commission staff working documents on evaluation and impact assessment
- Consultation and review of these draft Commission staff working documents within DG SANTE and with other Commission DGs
- Scrutiny of the evaluation and impact assessment work by the Commission's Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB)

Expected steps, December 2021-March 2022

- The Commission will proceed with drafting a proposed legislative proposal, consulting on this within DG SANTE and with other Commission DGs
- A formal Commission inter-service consultation on the legislative proposal and its eventual adoption and translation into all EU languages

At the end of the process

- Publication of the legislative proposal, Commission evaluation and impact assessment staff working documents and final reports of the supporting external studies
- The Commission's SUD website will be kept updated on the overall process as additional information becomes available

DEFENSIVES – ON SUD REVISION/F2F PESTICIDE TARGETS

1. What is the basis for pesticide targets in the F2F Strategy, are these just arbitrary numbers, what happens if they are not achieved by 2030, how can they be made legally binding? How will the different MS starting points be taken into account, one Member State might already have reduced use a lot and not be able to reduce it by another 50% while another Member State could potentially reduce use by more than 50% if its actions have been weak up to now ?

(a)What is the basis for the Farm to Fork Targets?

The Farm to Fork pesticide targets have been established based on the extensive experience gained in the development of the existing Harmonised Risk Indicator 1¹ (HRI 1) and with consideration of meeting the aim of a significant reduction in the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides.

Target 1. The 50% reduction target for the use and risk of chemical pesticides was chosen as an ambitious, but achievable target, given that HRI 1 decreased by approximately 3% per year in the six year period from the 2011-2013 period to 2018.

¹ The trend in the use and risk of chemical pesticides under the Farm to Fork Strategy will be estimated based on the Harmonised Risk Indicator 1 (HRI 1) methodology.

Target 2: The target for the reduction of use of the more hazardous pesticides under the Farm to Fork Strategy was chosen to specifically reduce the use of these pesticides, given that their use increased by 9% in the six year period from the 2011-2013 period to 2018. The 50% reduction target was chosen as these active substances comprise approximately one seventh of all approved active substances for use in PPPs, so the Commission is satisfied that for the majority of crop/pest combinations, there should be alternative controls available.

(b) What happens if the targets are not achieved by 2030?

The Farm to Fork targets, which are at EU level, are non-binding and aspirational. However, consideration is being given in the context of the revision of Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides² as to whether the targets for pesticides should be made mandatory at Member State and/or EU level. Member States and the European Parliament will take the final decision in the legislative process.

(c) How will the different Member State starting points be taken into account, one Member State might already have reduced use a lot and not be able to reduce it by another 50% while another Member State could potentially reduce

² https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/sustainable_use_pesticides_en

use by more than 50% if its actions have been weak up to now ?

In working towards the targets, the Farm to Fork Strategy makes it clear that *'the approach will take into account different starting points and differences in improvement potential in the Member States.'* This is already the case with the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD)³ where Member States are required to set their own targets for pesticide reduction in National Action Plans (NAPs) - to allow for differing national circumstances. This requirement has been in force for many years and has been implemented to a disappointing extent by Member States as evidenced by Commission's SUD implementation reports to European Parliament and Council⁴.

2. Farmers cannot be left without means to protect their crops. How will the availability and use of more low-risk and biological pesticides be supported to replace chemical pesticides?

The Farm to Fork Strategy must move us down the road of reducing our dependency on synthetic chemical pesticides.

I agree that we need to encourage more use of low-risk and biological alternatives. We will look closely at how we can

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:02009L0128-20091125>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/plant/docs/pesticides_sud_report-act_2020_en.pdf

expedite phasing-out the more hazardous pesticides, and streamline and speed up approval procedures for lower risk products. In fact, we are in the process of reviewing data requirements and assessment methodologies **for micro-organisms**, the most promising group of biological pesticides, to foster their placing on the market while making their risk assessment more fit for purpose.

The Commission is preparing amendments to the rules applying for **bio-pesticides, in particular micro-organisms, with the aim at fostering their placing on the market to help substituting chemical plant protection products**. Four draft Regulations updating the data requirements and the decision-making and approval criteria have been prepared and are in public consultation via the Feedback mechanism. A vote in the Standing Committee is **expected in January 2022**, followed by scrutiny by the Parliament and the Council.

The Commission has **already drawn up a specific Guidance documents aiming at facilitating the approval of semiochemicals** (i.e. pheromones) and botanicals (e.g. plant extracts). Once the work on micro-organisms is concluded, **the Commission will consider whether further action is required, similar to what has been done for micro-organisms.)**

However, we must look at plant protection more broadly. We must actively promote the implementation of low pesticide-input management practices such as integrated pest management and organic farming. Efforts are needed on the side of Member States to develop these practices at farm level. The common agricultural policy (CAP) is also a powerful mean to make farmers better adopt these practices through both linking compliance with legal requirements to CAP payments (the 'conditionality' mechanism) and providing financial support to practices going beyond the legal requirements (e.g. through 'ecoschemes' and 'management commitments'). The CAP also provide technical support to the development of IPM and organic farming through knowledge production and exchange as well as with advice to farmers.

We must also ensure that where pesticides are used, they are used correctly and safely through training of operators, independent advice, certification and testing of equipment.

3. Stakeholder organisations, such as COCERAL⁵ CropLife Europe⁶, as well as public bodies such as the USDA⁷ and the JRC⁸ have carried out studies relating to the effect of achieving the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity targets. How will the findings of these studies be used? Why has the Commission not carried out its own cumulative Impact assessment for the Farm to Fork targets? And what about the JRC CAP Green Deal study, which was carried out by the Commission itself?

(a) How will the findings of these studies be used?

The contractor carrying out the external study for the Commission to support the evaluation and impact assessment of SUD is **aware and has considered all these studies** in their assessment⁹.

Of course, the findings of these studies can be used to inform the ongoing SUD review. However, each of these studies makes certain assumptions in its work and in some case is linked to the

⁵ COCERAL shares its [impact assessment](#) of the European Commission's Farm to Fork proposals in lively online debate. (June 2021)

⁶ CropLife Europe have commissioned a Farm to Fork/Biodiversity Strategy cumulative impact assessment to Wageningen University. It seems Wageningen University & Research is due to publish their report carried out on behalf of CropLife Europe in October.2021

⁷ On November 2, 2020, USDA's Economic Research Service released [a report](#) looking at the potential economic and related impacts of the European Commission's proposed Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies.

⁸ The Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) published a [study](#) modelling the implementation of the CAP reform proposals from June 2018.

⁹ Study supporting the evaluation of Directive 2009/128/EC on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides and Impact assessment of its possible revision (Ramboll).

views of a particular interest group. Finally, **it is the Commission's own evaluation and impact assessment, carried out in line with the Commission's Better Regulation principles, which will guide the future direction of the SUD.**

The SUD review process is **particularly comprehensive, supported by an external, study, online public consultation and complemented by a 6 month foresight study.** The contractor working on the external study has highlighted the active and constructive input from stakeholders throughout the process. However, **all additional external data and evidence can be very useful in complementing the work done by the Commission.**

(b) Why has the Commission not carried out its own cumulative Impact assessment for the Farm to Fork targets?

The targets announced in the Farm to Fork Strategy are political commitments. Any proposal to make these targets legally binding will be preceded by a thorough impact assessment and will ultimately be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. In the development of these binding targets and legislative proposals, the state of play and the efforts made over the years by Member States will be taken into account

(c) What about the **JRC CAP Green Deal study** which was done by the Commission itself?

The Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) published a study modelling the implementation of the CAP reform proposals from June 2018. The analysis includes the effects of achieving four targets as put forward in the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies. These targets relate to the reduction of pesticides, nutrient losses and the increase of organic farming and high-diversity landscape features.

It is important to highlight that this study is not an impact assessment of the two strategies. Only certain objectives and actions are taken into account, limiting the scope of the study and leading to a likely overestimation of projected impacts. Specific impact assessments are foreseen for all significant Farm to Fork Strategy legislative initiatives.

The aim of this study is to feed the debate and inform policy-making around the transition towards more sustainable food systems. The Commission is committed to make this transition successful without negatively affecting the livelihood of farmers or food security.

The new Common Agricultural Policy, to be implemented from 2023, will be a key tool in supporting farmers and enabling this transition, in line with the Green Deal. The Commission encourages Member States to be ambitious in their CAP strategic

plans in terms of environment and climate. This is where the new CAP can make a real difference.

4. How is the future CAP going to reduce the use and risk of pesticides and contribute to reaching these pesticide targets?

Economic incentives and technical support will be very important in terms of helping farmers make the changes needed to meet the Farm to Fork pesticide targets. In Europe, we are looking at the CAP to provide those financial incentives.

In short, we want to incentivise farmers to use IPM and low risk pesticides and possibly dis-incentivise farmers away from the use of more hazardous pesticides. The CAP will have a crucial role in this regard.

The Regulation on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plans foresees that Member States will draft an intervention strategy (a National Strategic Plan) contributing to the nine specific objectives and the cross-cutting objective of the future CAP, and these Plans will include the targets (at the level of result indicators) and the planned interventions. In addition, Member States have been invited to set explicit national values to be met by 2030 as contribution to the EU Green Deal targets, including pesticides.

Member States will need to demonstrate a high level of ambition in their National Strategic Plans on pesticides, in line with the new Farm to Fork pesticides targets. The Commission will scrutinise these values against all available evidence and will ensure that the level of ambition is comparable across all 27 plans.

The CAP National Strategic Plans will provide important opportunities to fund actions in line with the Farm to Fork pesticide reduction targets, for example, on IPM. Financial support for sustainability on farms can take several forms, e.g. annual 'eco-schemes' or multiannual 'management commitments' beyond a baseline which includes the basic conditions set in the EU law. The compliance with these basic EU legal requirements is the basis of the mechanism of conditionality, which links all CAP payments received by the farmer to this compliance through possible reductions of these CAP payments in case of infringement

The CAP also foresees technical support to farmers through knowledge exchange (e.g. European Innovation Partnerships) and advice (Farm Advisory Services).

5. Does the Commission really believe that new technologies like GMO and drones are the answer to protect citizens and the environment from the harmful effects of pesticides?

Research and innovation, investments, digitalisation and new technologies are at the heart of the Farm to Fork strategy, as pivotal to accompany the transition towards sustainable food systems. New technology can help meet the objectives of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD) i.e. to reduce the risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment.

With regard to drones:

Under the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive, the use of drones to apply pesticides is classified as aerial spraying and can only be permitted under derogation if a series of conditions are met.

This technology is being considered, in the evaluation of the SUD and by the impact assessment supporting its planned revision, which is ongoing.

The 3 options under consideration for the impact assessment are:

- Baseline/status quo: Amend definition of aerial spraying to confirm (again) that aerial spraying can be performed via any airborne device including drones, not just planes and helicopters
- Medium: Under certain conditions to be defined in a future legislative Annex, no derogation would be required

for aerial spraying by drones if demonstrated to reduce overall use and risk

- Most ambitious: Allow spraying (including aerial spraying) without prohibition and without derogation if the spraying instrument is less than 2 metres from the crop being sprayed, other parameters concerning use and risk would need to be studied and established.

The impact assessment will be evidence based, so we have encouraged all stakeholders to submit data and evidence to support the review process.

With regard to GMOs:

Biotechnology provides tools that can be used to introduce favourable traits in plants. The Commission's study on new genomic techniques (NGTs) (SWD (2021) 92 final) found that these new techniques can make plants resistant to pests and needing less chemical pesticides, or resistant to the effects of climate change such as increased temperature and drought.

The Commission considers that these traits are fit to contribute to the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork and biodiversity strategies as well as to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.