

## Christmas 2018

### President's Address

On the edge of 2018 to 2019 and near the end of my six-year period as president of IBMA it is a good moment to look back and see what happened over those years in IBMA and with our objectives. Of course, the future is even more important, and I will share some of my expectations with you as well. Did I know what I was stepping into when I put my candidature forward for the role of president? A bit, as I had been in the Executive Committee for a number of years as representative of the Dutch association. But not that it would be so exciting, intense and time consuming, and at times frustrating. Let me give you a taste of the topics that passed my desk.



*IBMA President  
Willem Ravensberg  
at ABIM 2018*

### Governance and organization

First of all, one goal was to make IBMA a more professional organization, financially stable, and to include members more in the activities. We moved the association from a small Basel office to a nice office in Brussels, in the Copa-Cogeca building, one of our very important partners. Being right in the heart of the European Union with its institutions not far away from our office. Today we are still very happy with our office and location.

We have been able to strengthen our four Professional Groups that each have a steering committee and where members actively work on their objectives. Also, we have been able to strengthen the National Groups and support them where needed and possible. Some are really well structured and connected and obtain important results, others still are working on becoming stronger and more active.



We were able to increase our staff and even just last week Ulf Heilig was contracted as our Regulatory Affairs Director starting in 2019, no longer as a consultant but as an IBMA employee. And even more fresh news is that we have signed the contract with the new Executive Director that will ultimately replace David Cary, after a period of hand-over. I am happy to report that the Executive Director designate has degrees in agriculture, business and sustainable development and over 15 years' experience in development and marketing of macrobials, microbials, pheromones and natural substances in Europe and North Africa and broader regulatory experience in Europe, Brazil and USA. I am convinced we have a very capable candidate that is ready to make IBMA progress. We still have to keep the name confidential but expect to reveal it soon.

To keep the daily activities in IBMA well prioritized and going, we installed a monthly Board teleconference that has been very efficient and successful. Next to the quarterly Executive Committee meetings we often organized a meeting with the National Groups on a certain topic. With such meetings alignment between 'global' and national was secured.

The formation of BioProtection Global was deemed a necessity and executed in 2014. Having our objectives addressed with sister associations around the world is crucial to the future of biocontrol. I was happy to be the first president of BPG. Last but not least we celebrated our 20th anniversary in 2015, and are already looking forward to our jubilee of 25 years in 2020.



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### IBMA objectives and activities

The topics we were engaged in were mainly on the regulatory front. Our priority was, and still is, to get our biocontrol products faster to the market and to the farmer who needs more tools for maintaining a healthy crop. After trying this for many years through connecting with the relevant institution in the European Commission which was not delivering what we desired for, we decided to take a step into the political arena, to the European Parliament (EP) and, where possible, to national parliaments.

We hired PA Europe to join us in that process from 2014 onwards. We are also happy that Copa-Cogeca was very supportive to our lobbying and we often co-signed letters to the policymakers.

Our best result so far has been that the EP has adopted with a large majority a resolution for a fast track system for low risk plant protection products. This happened on February 15, 2017. The Commission was called by the EP to amend Reg. 1107/2009 before the end of 2018. The Commission choose not to do that until today, and instead refers to the REFIT process of the Regulation and possibly comes with recommendations to amend 1107 only later.

This is a process that we anticipate will take many years. Instead, IBMA and PA are still working on having the resolution followed by the COM by gaining more support from national governments. Early February we will have a high-level meeting in the EP to address the need for a quick system to approve low risk PPPs. We will keep you informed regarding that event.



*Building of the European Parliament in Brussels*

Apart from the fast track system within 1107/2009, IBMA has been deliberating a lot on the registration system as it is. We feel it is not appropriate for our products at all, and in a White Paper we have laid down our views on a future system for regulating our products. I am sure you have seen it since we launched it at ABIM, we will continue to lobby for a better system and gain support for it. We received many signals that strengthen us to continue in that direction.

Other topics that demanded our attention were the Nagoya Protocol and ABS, contacts with stakeholders. A few examples of organisations with whom we keep close contacts are OECD, FAO, EPPO, MUCF, IFOAM, PAN, IOBC, EBIC, ECPA, etc.

Worth looking back at is also our project on closer collaboration/merger talks with EBIC, the European association for biostimulants. From both sides it is felt that we have a lot in common and that we are both engaged in getting better regulations for our types of products. Working together on that would have been an objective in a new organization, however, it was decided not to merge due to a number of obstacles. As a result, we have established a closer collaboration and will work on mutually important matters.

ABIM, the Annual Biocontrol Industry Meeting, as a joint project of IBMA and FiBL has become the most visited event on biocontrol in the world and both partners can be very proud of that achievement. IBMA will continue to progress that success.



With NewAG International (now a part of Informa), we have been involved in other biocontrol meetings around the world to promote biocontrol and set up networking and collaboration between global and local players in our business. These meetings are vital for our industry and the adoption of our products by farmers in all parts of the world and we continue to be involved in such events.

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### Communication

Over the years we have been able to create an efficient website where members are kept up to date on all activities within IBMA. Information can be found on regulatory topics, meetings, conferences, presentations of our staff, search for members, IBMA Position Papers, news, etc. We monitor the metrics of the website and more and more our website is visited and readers also stay longer connected.

A goal for the future is to work on communicating with a broader audience to present the message of biocontrol and sustainable agriculture. Our Working Group on Communication will assist Isabelle in this challenging goal. The Newsletter and Newsflash also greatly contribute to communication with members and stakeholders, and I dare say that our outreach has greatly improved over the years.

The White Paper can only become successful if we communicate its contents to the right audiences and in the right way. A follow up is part of that. Not a task that we should take lightly, but an essential one in achieving our goals.



*Promoting the IBMA White Paper is amongst our most important current communication activities*

### A look into the future

Everyone in crop protection and crop management understands the changes that need to occur in order to feed so many more people in a sustainable way. If the Sustainable Development Goals of the FAO along with their 2030 Agenda will be successful, we all need to contribute. A great chance for our biocontrol industry, but we will need to work hard to achieve those goals. It is clear that everyone wants to go that way, but like last week with discussions on the changing climate and measures that need to be taken, do we really invest in the needed change, even if it is painful in some areas. We have no other choice then to keep our people and planet healthy. A challenging future for all of us, but we have no other option than growing crops in a sustainable way with tools that have low impact on human health and the environment.

Surely biocontrol is key to that in the next decades. It is up to policymakers to facilitate that in a timely manner, they have lingered too long in current systems. To make relevant steps, we need to accept that old systems usually do not work for innovations. We need innovative decision makers and innovative regulations. That is why I strongly support IBMA's political and strategic agenda in this direction, and will remain supporting that where possible. I count on you too as we can only reach results when we cooperate.



*Aphidius spp*

# IBMA Newsletter

International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association

## Christmas 2018



### Thank you and best of luck

The role of IBMA president has been very rewarding to me. I look back at it as one of the best periods in my career. There is so much happening on a day to day level within IBMA as I experienced, it is hard to explain and communicate it all, hard to give you a feel of that. It has not always been easy and pleasant, but most of the time I enjoyed working for the biocontrol industry, on national, European and global level. It has enriched me in so many areas, particularly at the political level in the EU. Unfortunately, “progress is a snail” and one has to fight so hard for the obvious improvements, still I believe to fight for the right cause. I have done that with many others during these six years, and I thank all of you who gave me your confidence and support and to all that have contributed.

I am proud of IBMA and the persons who give their energy and time to the association. I enjoyed working with all of you, the members, committee members, EC members, our current staff and staff members from the past. Thanks to the Board members Vittorio, Roma and Ralf for our pleasant collaboration. I would like to thank also the team of PA Europe under the inspiring leadership of Rio Praaning. Our collaboration has been very intense and we have achieved a lot, but not all we wanted.



*IBMA President Willem Ravensberg (right) with former IBMA Vice-President Vittorio Veronelli at the 20 years anniversary of IBMA and 10 year anniversary of ABIM*



*Busy Auditorium at ABIM 2018*

Low-risk and IBMA are well known with the EP and COM now, and surely this will bring us further in the near future. Special thanks to the IBMA office team Isabelle, Louisa, Ulf and David. David, it has been a pleasure working so close with you on all these topics, we made a good team and stand for the same objectives. Thanks a lot.

I wish the new president Sylvia Plak and new treasurer Karine Grosbeau all the best in IBMA, together with all active members. Because, remember, IBMA and the future of biocontrol needs you!!

**Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year**

**Willem Ravensberg**

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### Executive Director's Address

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year to all. May 2019 be that breakthrough year, after all REFIT will finally be delivered!

Those of you who know me well will realise that the last comment is extremely sarcastic as I hold little hope that REFIT will deliver anything let alone the reform to the regulation governing our biocontrol products in Europe. So, enjoy your break, we have got a lot to get on with in 2019!

Change is definitely upon us after having experienced some strong and familiar governance with our board over the last six years as Willem detailed in his address, we move on. Having attended an in person IBMA Board teleconference last week with the new and old boards, I can let you in on a secret...the incoming board members are just as dedicated, just as passionate and wanting the right processes for our industry as our outgoing board members. Naturally there will be a settling in period to come up to speed with the challenges, however I am sure that Sylvia and Karine will alongside Roma continue to support and lead the efforts of our secretariat and to represent the association. All strongly believe biocontrol will play a huge role in agriculture of the future.

Our IBMA secretariat is strengthened by Ulf coming on board in an employed capacity to dedicate more time to IBMA matters. Welcome Ulf! Isabelle and Louisa will continue to provide the experience in advancing our communications and ensuring a robust administration and support for Karine in her role as Treasurer. I am welcoming our incoming Executive Director joining us at some point in 2019 and tailoring the handover to suit their needs and those of the Board. I am ready during the upcoming year to serve the association in areas that are prioritised whilst letting my successor take on the areas they choose at the pace they deem appropriate.



The IBMA Executive Committee and Staff in 2018



IBMA engagement in key areas during the coming year should be supported by our secretariat and members.

Those areas are foreseen as:

- Participation in the EU Biopesticide Expert Group especially after recently upgraded time, resources and priorities have been allocated.
- The annual SUD Symposium in the European Parliament in conjunction with PAN and IOBC.
- Definitions and scope relevant to our industry and its future direction. Let us take the lead!
- Key partnerships following our Copa-Cogeca refreshed roadmap to include but not limited to organisations such as: IFOAM, Union Fleurs and MUCF.
- Establishing greater co-operation with DG Agri, EFSA and other relevant stakeholders.
- More National Group collaboration, alignment and work efforts.
- Better regulation for biocontrol products to allow them to enter the market and facilitate the change to the greener holistic agriculture all of society needs and wants.
- An even bigger and better and more successful ABIM.

If we can achieve progress in most of these areas I believe we will have had a good year for your association and I will have handed over a dynamic and progressive association, just as Willem and Ralf have passed on to their successors Sylvia and Karine.

I am sure you will join me in offering Willem and Ralf an extremely big thank you and an enjoyable and Merry Christmas. And welcome Sylvia and Karine to what I am sure will be another successful IBMA year.

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year !**

**David Cary**

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