

IBMA Position on Copper as a PPP

IBMA, the International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association, defines bioprotection or biocontrol technologies as four categories, namely,

- microorganisms,
- semiochemicals,
- invertebrate biocontrol agents (also known as macrobials)
- natural substances.

These biocontrol technologies have their origins in nature and have minimal impact in the environment. As currently used and regulated, in the EU copper, although a natural substance, is not described as having minimal impact in the environment. Copper does not therefore come within the IBMA definition of bioprotection and biocontrol.

IBMA advocates that Integrated Pest Management (IPM), as explained in the Sustainable Use Directive for Pesticides, is key to the transition in agriculture. Organic production methods rely on IPM and IBMA recognises the important role that copper plays in organic farming today. However, innovations in bioprotection that provide alternative solutions to copper are in development. In turn innovations in copper, that reduce the future use rate of copper substantially, are also under development. Copper and particularly some of the low-rate copper innovations, could play a role in supporting the use of bioprotection, until the development and adoption of alternatives.

The debate around copper and its approval status highlights the inadequacies of Reg (EC) No 1107/2009 in providing an appropriate risk assessment framework for natural substances. When considering other natural substances that do fall within the IBMA definition of bioprotection, similar challenges are seen in achieving a proportionate and appropriate risk assessment using 1107/2009. IBMA advocates that a regulation specifically adapted to risk assessment of bioprotection is necessary to achieve the Farm to Fork strategy goals.