



Regulation on Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products proposal:

IBMA welcomes the first EU wide definition of biological control and setting national biocontrol targets to deliver on the EU Green deal ambition

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IBMA, the voice of the biocontrol sector, congratulates the European Commission for including an EU wide definition of biological control in the proposal for a new EU Regulation on Sustainable Use of PPPs. An EU definition, relying ‘on natural means of biological origin or substances identical to them’, will provide essential legal clarity. And national indicative targets for biocontrol will provide much needed certainty for more nature based investments and innovation to support farmers.

The inclusion of the first EU wide definition of biocontrol provides a strong lever to help farmers in the transition to sustainable agriculture. By prioritising non-chemical alternatives, biodiversity will be regenerated, nature restored and agricultural production secured, making the system more resilient to the food crisis and to the current threat to global food security following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

As strongly underlined by IBMA Executive Director, Jennifer Lewis: ‘‘Biocontrol is finally recognized in EU law, which is a significant breakthrough for the industry, farmers and the EU Green Deal. Finally, we will have the clarity and the certainty to support farmers and the many SMEs innovating in biocontrol. Now we must use this definition to speed up biocontrol registration to unlock our industry potential and help deliver the wider benefits to biodiversity, human and soil health.’’

IBMA is particularly pleased to see an EU definition that encompasses the four established categories of biocontrol. As stated in the proposal ‘biological control’ means the control of organisms harmful to plants or plant products using natural means of biological origin or substances identical to them, such as micro-organisms, semiochemicals, extracts from plant products as defined in Article 3(6) of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009, or invertebrate macro-organisms.’ This provides flexibility to include the natural substances identical to those of biological origin in addition to the plant extracts listed in Reg.1107/2009 thus enabling future innovation.

Having a definition facilitates the separation of positive biocontrol targets from chemical pesticide reduction targets and provides an option for National Strategic Plans (CAP) to include financial incentives for biocontrol promotion as part of their Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programmes. The renaming of the proposal from 'pesticides' to 'plant protection products' is a huge step forward for the future of farming and the upgrade from Directive to Regulation will lead to more effective science-based implementation.

As shown by the current crisis, the resilience of the food system requires a fundamental re-orientation of EU agriculture towards more sustainable regenerative practices and a reduction of dependence on inputs, including pesticides. The proposal for a Regulation on the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products is a breakthrough for the future of farming. However, to practically deliver biocontrol solutions, an EU fast track authorisation process is essential. The biocontrol sector will contribute positively to the upcoming legislative process to help realise the Commission's ambitions for the future of farming, to speed up access to farmers of biocontrol products.

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