

**Copa-Cogeca IBMA Joint letter to the EU Commission asking to ensure biocontrol solutions are made available to farmers without unnecessary delays**

Brussels, 25th April 2024

Dear President Von der Leyen,

Since 2011, farmers across Europe have been strongly committed in reducing their use of chemical Plant Protection Products (PPPs) but, at the same time, they are facing lack of sufficient access to effective, economically viable and safe alternatives such as biocontrol. This **gap in our farmers' toolbox** endangers their ability to fight against pests and diseases and remain productive, contributing to farmers' distress at the source of their recent protests.

In the current context, where **food security and strategic autonomy** have arisen as key EU strategic priorities, **biocontrol and low-risk solutions have a crucial role to play in making sure the EU meets its food needs**. Biocontrol allows farmers to continue to operate in a sustainable manner and bring high-quality produce to our tables. For this, farmers must have a timely access to these solutions at scale, as well as receive adequate training on how to effectively implement them in their fields – both of which are currently not a reality.

**Biocontrol products and low risk PPPs are proven alternatives to control pests and diseases effectively and sustainably, offering a solution to fill the existing gap** in farmers' toolbox and meet their needs. As a non-chemical and targeted input, biocontrol application contributes to enhancing soil quality and biodiversity by creating favourable status for microbial communities. Furthermore, biocontrol minimises chemical residues and therefore the risk of environmental contamination in soil, water and human health. Biocontrol can work standalone or can form part of a pest and disease management programme with chemicals.

For many years<sup>1</sup>, Copa-Cogeca and the International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA) see **biocontrol solutions as part of the key instruments to the farming of the future**. However, **authorisation processes in Europe are unduly long, especially in comparison to other competitors such as Brazil and USA, and therefore urgently need to be speeded up so that alternative PPPs can reach farmers' toolbox at scale**. Once in the farmers' toolbox, these solutions will provide effective pest and disease control on over 28 million hectares of which 23 million are arable crops.

For all the above, we **call on the European Commission to urgently speed up the procedures for placing biocontrol products on the market** to ensure these solutions are made available to farmers without unnecessary delays. Urgent actions must be deployed to meet farmers' desperate need for alternative tools to fight plant pests and diseases in the current context of shortage and climate change.

We would also like to invite the Commission to engage into a constructive dialogue with relevant stakeholders to urgently address these challenges to boost the competition potential of European farmers.

We would appreciate having the opportunity to discuss the above and the needed next steps in more detail.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lewis, **IBMA**, *Executive Director*

Patrick Pagani, **Copa-Cogeca**, *Deputy Secretary General*

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<sup>1</sup> [IBMA Copa-Cogeca Roadmap for collaboration 2018-2025](#)