

The UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP)

Full Minutes of the meeting of the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP) held on 10 March 2020

Those present:

Chairman:

Prof W Cushley

Members:

Prof R Blackshaw; Ms H Chambers; Mr R Davis; Mr M Dempsey; Dr J Garratt; Mr M Glynn; Dr M Hare; Prof T Hutchinson; Prof T Lock; Dr R Mann; Dr C Morris; Prof A Smith; Prof D Spurgeon and Dr M Whelan

Assessors:

Mr D Mortimer (FSA); Ms G Reay (representing Scottish Government); Mr D Williams (Defra) and Mr M Williams (Welsh Government)

Advisors:

Mr A Dixon (HSE); Mr D Flynn (HSE); Ms S Hugo (Defra); Dr H Nakeeb (Public Health England); Dr C Snaith (HSE) and Ms M Wade (HSE)

Others:

Ms J Berrie (HSE); Mr B Bircher (HSE); Ms A Gane (HSE); Ms S Mason (HSE); Mr S Swinton (HSE) and Ms N Turley (HSE)

Apologies:

Dr S Wilkinson; Dr S Jess (representing the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland) and Mr J Newman (Environment Agency);

Agenda Item 1: Introduction

1.1 The Chair reminded the meeting of the confidentiality of the papers and their discussions. If Members believed that they had a commercial or financial interest in any of the items being discussed, they are required to declare their interest to the Chair and Secretariat prior to the meeting. They may then either be invited to absent themselves

from the discussions; not participate; and/or not be involved in any discussions and decision-making, unless invited to do so.

1.2 One Member identified a potential conflict of interest at item 4, but it was determined that they could remain and participate in discussion on the relevant agenda item.

1.3 The Chair welcomed Prof D Spurgeon who has been appointed as a Member of the Committee.

Agenda Item 2: Full Minutes of the previous meeting [ECP 1 (34/2020)]

2.1 The draft Full Minutes of the January 2020 meeting were agreed subject to a minor amendment.

Agenda Item 3: Matters arising and Forward Business Plan [ECP 2 (34/2020)]

3.1 The Secretariat provided an update on matters arising from previous meetings and invited Members to suggest any additions/amendments to the forward business plan which would be incorporated before the next meeting.

Agenda item 4: Active Substance Reviews

4.1 Isoflucypram

4.1.1 HSE provided a short update on progress noting that they are awaiting further information from the applicant to address data gaps. This is expected at the end of March 2020. HSE's assessment of the data will be presented to the Committee for consideration at a future meeting.

4.2 Tebuconazole [ECP 3 – 3-5 (34/2020)]

4.2.1 Tebuconazole was first considered by the Committee in November 2019, where issues requiring Independent Scientific Advice were identified by HSE. Committee Members requested clarification of a number of points. Responses to these had been received from HSE and the applicants and were presented to the Committee. Following discussion of the information received and taking account of the views of Members, HSE confirmed that it was able to formulate the questions on which independent scientific advice would be sought and would formally submit these to ECP for advice at the June 2020 meeting.

4.3 Epoxiconazole [ECP 4 – 4-1 (34/2020)]

4.3.1 Epoxiconazole was first considered by the Committee in September 2019, where issues requiring Independent Scientific Advice were identified by HSE. Committee Members requested clarification of a number of points. Responses to these had been received from HSE and the applicant, and were presented to the January 2020 meeting. Following discussion of the information received and taking account of the views of Members, HSE confirmed that it was able to formulate the questions on which independent scientific advice would be sought and had formally submitted these to ECP for advice at this meeting.

4.3.2 Members considered the questions put to them for Independent Scientific Advice on the Renewal Assessment Report for epoxiconazole and provided their advice to HSE.

4.3.3 The Secretariat introduced a draft advice template to present the epoxiconazole advice to Government. It was agreed that this will be completed by the Secretariat and presented for discussion at the April 2020 meeting.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda item 5: Active Substance trial review [ECP 5 and 6 (34/2020)]

5.1 The Secretariat informed the ECP that it was appropriate to review progress with the pilot project trialling arrangements for generating independent scientific advice on active substances. Members were reminded that the pilot was established to enable the UK Government to have access to independent scientific advice following EU exit, but that the Committee should not necessarily be constrained by this, being able to raise any wider issues it felt appropriate. The trial was designed to ensure that the Committee had the capability and capacity to carry out the function of providing independent scientific advice.

5.2 As part of the trial, there have been a number of 'familiarisation days', with HSE and ECP Members considering data/information and how this is applied and interpreted within the regulatory framework and risk assessment process. The feedback from these sessions has been positive, and they were useful exercises which enabled Members to better understand how science is applied within the context of the regulatory framework and process.

5.3 The Secretariat provided an overview of the process that has evolved during the trial, noting areas that have already been developed and highlighting those that may require further attention. In discussion the Committee noted:

- the importance of continuing to highlight the independence of the Committee.
- that timelines around the process should be made clear as these will be important once the process is live.

- the need to recognise the amount of work that Members carry out in smaller subgroups outside of the formal structure of meetings.
- The volume of information, and challenge for Members in keeping track of multiple issues from a number of dossiers over a number of months.

5.4 Any further comments on the trial should be sent to the Secretariat by 18 March 2020.

Action: All

Agenda item 6: HSE Updates

6.1 Update on risk mitigation measures

6.1.1 HSE introduced this item, updating the Committee on on-going work to move to a points-based system, involving the use of a 'toolbox' approach to mitigating the risks from spray drift. HSE aim to launch the new system in January 2021. HSE noted that these arrangements are in line with the direction that stakeholders wish to move towards following comments received from a recent consultation, and it would be sufficiently flexible to take new risk mitigation measures into account.

6.1.2 HSE also noted that they were likely to seek Committee advice on issues related to the use of non-target arthropod buffer zones.

6.2 Stewardship update

6.2.1 HSE gave an update on the stewardship scheme in place for products which contain certain active substances that are authorised on the condition that the use be accompanied by a stewardship programme. The only active substance still subject to such arrangements is aminopyralid. HSE reported that they had met with the product stewardship group recently. They have also received correspondence from two stakeholders about the stewardship. HSE will bring a paper to the ECP for advice at a future meeting.

Action: HSE

6.3 Official Controls: update on review

6.3.1 HSE informed the Committee that the Official Controls Regulation (EU) 2017/625 which would apply to enforcement of potentially all pesticide regulations came into force on 14 December 2019. The Regulation unified the system and control activities across food and feed law, animal health and welfare, plant health and pesticides work, but will not change authorities currently conducting these activities. The pesticide part of the Regulation has not yet been implemented in the UK due to a number of outstanding questions, however HSE and Defra have set up a project to deliver this.

Agenda item 7: Date of next meeting

7.1 21 April 2020 – Foss House, Kings Pool, York.

Post meeting note: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in line with government guidance, it was agreed that this meeting would be held virtually and not in person.

Agenda item 8: Any other business

8.1 First UK authorisation of product containing active substance new to the UK – ‘Kanemite SC’ [ECP 7 – 7-3 (34/2020)]

8.1.1 HSE introduced a paper for information relating to an application for the first authorisation in the UK for ‘Kanemite SC’ (contains acequinocyl) as an acaricide for use on outdoor apple, pear, cherry and plum including plum grown outdoors under temporary rain cover. There has also been a Minor Use authorisation on hops, meaning there will no longer be a need for an emergency authorisation application. The Committee noted the authorisation.

8.2 First UK authorisation of product containing active substance new to the UK – ‘Harpun’ [ECP 8 – 8-1 (34/2020)]

8.2.1 HSE introduced a paper for information relating to an application for the first authorisation in the UK for ‘Harpun’ (contains pyriproxyfen) as an insecticide for use on outdoor apple and pear and indoor tomatoes and cucumber. The Committee noted the authorisation.

8.3 Impacts of Pesticides on Human Health questionnaire [ECP 9 (34/2020)]

8.3.1 The ECP have received an invitation to participate in a survey being conducted on behalf of Defra relating to the impacts of pesticides on human health. The Committee agreed they would respond and provide a Member to participate in an interview being conducted as part of the research. The Committee offered to assist Defra with any follow-up work, if this would be of help to the Department.

8.4 2020 Open Event

8.4.1 Members agreed to hold an Open Meeting around either the November or January meeting. A paper outlining the format of the Meeting will be presented at a future meeting.

Action: Members

8.5 Pesticide Usage Survey reports 2018 [ECP 10 – 10-4 (34/2020)]

8.5.1 The Committee noted the publication of detailed Pesticides Usage Survey Reports (arable crops, soft fruits, orchard crops and potato stores). Members noted that changes to

the authorisation of products used in the cultivation and storage of potatoes were creating challenging conditions for this sector of the industry.

8.6 Chair's Report

8.6.1 The Chair noted that he would be meeting with Defra's new Chief Scientific Advisor, Prof Gideon Henderson at an annual meeting of all Scientific Committee Chairs on 16 March 2020.

Agenda item 9: Discussion with HSE Staff

9.1 Members and HSE discussed a number of topics including independent scientific advice and future arrangements.

**Rachel Merrick
ECP Secretariat
April 2020**