

## The UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP)

# Full Minutes of the meeting of the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP) held 15 December 2020

*Due to the covid-19 pandemic and lockdown measures that were in place, the meeting was held via Microsoft Teams.*

### **Those present:**

#### **Chairman:**

Prof W Cushley

#### **Members:**

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

#### **Assessors:**

Dr S Jess (representing the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland); Ms G Reay (representing Scottish Government); and Mr M Williams (Welsh Government)

#### **Advisors:**

Mr S Bailey (Natural England); Dr S Brescia (HSE); Ms E Butcher (Public Health England); Mr A Dixon (HSE); Mr G Stark (HSE); Mr D Flynn (HSE); Dr J Hingston (HSE); Ms S Hugo (Defra); Mr B Maycock (FSA); Dr J Newman (Environment Agency); Ms J O'Leary-Quinn (HSE); Dr C Snaith (HSE) and Ms M Wade (HSE)

#### **Others:**

Mr J Chambers (HSE); Mr J Dale (HSE); Mr T Fisher (HSE); Ms G Khan (HSE); Ms R Mabbett (HSE); Mr A MacDonald (HSE); Mr B Neill (HSE)

#### **Apologies:**

Dr J Garratt; Mr D Williams (Defra)

## **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 potential conflicts of interest, but it was decided that they could remain and participate in discussion on the relevant agenda item.

## **Agenda Item 2: Full Minutes of the previous meeting [ECP 1 (40/2020)]**

2.1 The draft Full Minutes of the November 2020 meeting were agreed subject to minor amendments.

## **Agenda Item 3: Matters arising and Forward Business Plan [ECP 2 (40/2020)]**

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.

3.3 The Committee noted that due to the current circumstances, the January 2021 ECP Meeting will be held virtually.

## **Agenda item 4: Independent Scientific Advice: Cinmethylin**

4.1 Cinmethylin was first considered by the Committee in November 2020, where issues requiring Independent Scientific Advice were identified by HSE. Committee Members considered the questions put to them for cinmethylin and began to formulate their advice.

4.2 The Secretariat introduced a working draft of the Independent Scientific Advice for cinmethylin. Members formally approved the draft note as a true representation of the advice they provided. The advice note will be submitted to HSE.

4.3 The ECP discussed the refined process that was trialled for generating independent scientific advice for cinmethylin and noted:

- The new process worked well. The paperwork circulated before the meeting was clearer and allowed for a more focussed and in-depth discussion between HSE and ECP Members
- There is a need to review the process and identify lessons for improvement including consideration of mechanisms that will enable relevant Government

departments and the Devolved Administrations to engage with HSE during development of the Draft Assessment Report and consideration of questions for Independent Scientific Advice.

- A considerable amount of work has been carried out by HSE, the Secretariat and Committee Members to ensure successful testing and demonstration of the process before the end of the transition period.

## **Agenda item 5: Emergency Authorisation: ‘Basamid’ on hardy ornamentals, baby leaf crops and protected lettuce [ECP 4 – 4-4 (40/2020)]**

5.1 The Government has received three applications for emergency authorisations for the use of ‘Basamid’ (contains dazomet) for use as a soil sterilant on forest nursery stock, lettuce and baby leaf crops

5.2 The active substance dazomet is approved but the product ‘Basamid’ was not re-registered due to concerns in multiple risk assessment areas and authorisation was withdrawn. The applicants have stated they are generating data and intend to submit a new application, so the data gaps are currently unaddressed except for residues.

5.3 The Committee was requested to provide advice on:

- The proposed use against the target *Fusarium oxysporum* FOL4 (on lettuce); whilst there are alternatives, each has various limitations or unknowns regarding effectiveness. Does the Committee consider the submitted justification of need sufficient to demonstrate that it cannot be controlled by other reasonable means?
- The effectiveness of the mitigation measures proposed by the applicant for operator, bystander and resident exposure. Are there any further restrictions or controls which could reduce the risk, in the event of a decision to grant the use?

5.4 The Committee were also asked for their opinion on whether the information provided by the applicant allows a view on the relative risks of a single application of this soil sterilant once every three years to control multiple targets, compared to the multiple applications of a range of other plant protection products suggested by the applicant to be reached.

5.5 The Committee noted HSE had concluded:

- The product will be used UK-wide with a period of use from 15 March to 14 May 2021 (spring use) and 1 September to 30 October 2021 (autumn use).
- The cases for need had been refused for all uses as there are alternatives available against the specified targets, although HSE have noted that there are more uncertainties over possible alternatives where *Fusarium oxysporum* FOL4 is concerned.
- The risks to operators, workers, bystanders and residues are predicted to be unacceptable. It was not possible to determine how these risks could be mitigated.

The risks are acceptable for all organisms for autumn use for all crops in soil for cropping with a restriction that the treated area must be covered with a totally impermeable material for 16 weeks after treatment.

- The risks are not acceptable to aquatic organisms exposed to the product via drainflow for spring use with either a 7 or 10 week period of impermeable covering on treated soil.

5.6 The Committee noted that:

- 'Basamid' has previously played an important role in forest nurseries, which are now anticipating significantly increased demand given current UK government tree planting targets and that alternative treatments were not viewed by operators as being as economic and/or delivering an equivalent degree of control.
- The conclusion that there was no impact on soil dwelling organisms was counter-intuitive since these include target pests. The designs of the two cited field studies are unlikely to be sufficiently robust to provide a clear outcome and if reviewed against current scientific knowledge might not support this conclusion.
- The application made reference to testing soils to establish levels of infestation, but had not indicated how this could be used to limit and control the use of the product.

5.7 The Committee agreed with HSE's assessment of the lack of evidence of a case for need and assessment of risks. In consideration of the specific questions asked by HSE:

- Members noted that no evidence had been provided to support the case for need for 'Basamid'. Whilst there was evidence available to indicate that the pest required control, options for doing this by other reasonable means were available. ECP questioned whether it would ever be appropriate to grant an emergency use for an unauthorised product when authorised alternatives were available.
- Members noted the exposure to operators was from dust and there was the potential to limit operator exposure to this by re-formulating the product to make it less dusty and by use of closed transfer systems. However, reformulating the product would necessitate the generation/consideration of additional data and would not necessarily address risks to bystanders. It was also noted that closed transfer systems were not widely available for the use of this product.
- Members noted that the risks of using this soil sterilant would differ from those associated with using alternative control programmes and that if Government wished to determine what these were a methodology should be developed. Consequently, ECP noted that it was not possible to present the use and assessed risks sought under the emergency authorisation application as a less risky alternative to existing authorised uses of alternative products.

5.8 It was noted that the applicant had proposed using 'Basamid' in conjunction with alternative methods of control. The Committee advised that non-chemical alternatives could also adversely impact soil properties and functioning for significant periods of time.

## **Agenda item 6: Proposed prioritisation approach for referral of compounds into Environment Agency's monitoring programmes [ECP 5 (40/2020)]**

6.1 HSE presented a paper outlining a proposal for criteria to identify active substances as priority substances for inclusion in the Environment Agency's water monitoring programme.

6.2 Members agreed the criteria identified were sensible and welcomed the proposal as a good way forward. Members suggested:

- Investigating whether it was possible to develop additional criteria that identified chemicals that may not be easily removed in the drinking water treatment process.
- Developing thinking around criteria relating to scale of use and applications to particular crops in particular water catchments
- Investigating whether previously approved active substances should be screened using the criteria.
- That new actives will be included once authorised until the data shows it no longer needs to be included in the monitoring programme.
- Consideration be given to integrating biological information. It was noted that UKWIR data is now publically available, providing useful information on chemicals detected in water from a range of sources.
- Review the criteria around emergency authorisations, noting the limited period of time such products tended to be authorised for use.
- Reviewing the use of RAC values as a criterion, suggesting that an alternative may be to differentiate between target organisms.

## **Agenda item 7: Human Health Monitoring Data: Review [ECP 6 – 6-1 (40/2020) and ECP 7 – 7-1 (40/2020)]**

7.1 HSE introduced papers relating to findings in the: National Poisons Information Service (NPIS) pesticide exposure monitoring report for 2019-20; and Human Biomonitoring data and Human Health Enquiry and Incident Survey for 2018 and 2019.

7.2 Members noted:

- the findings in the reports were similar to previous reports seen by the Committee and suggested that the authorisation regime was being sufficiently protective of human health.

- Areas such as the purchase of professional products by amateur users via internet platforms and unauthorised chemicals still being stored in domestic properties and elsewhere should be fed back to Defra as part of the consultation on the National Action Plan of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides. Members noted the successful pesticide amnesties that have been undertaken in Wales to address unauthorised chemicals being stored in domestic properties and elsewhere.

## **Agenda item 8: Date of next meeting**

8.1 26 January 2021 – It is likely this meeting will need to be held virtually.

## **Agenda item 9: Any other business**

### **9.1 Chair's Report**

9.1.1 The Secretariat noted three public consultations that ECP might wish to consider responding to. Firstly, the Government review of the National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides. Secondly, two EFSA consultations on non-monotonic dose response and risk communication. The Secretariat will circulate these to Members following the meeting.

**Action: Secretariat**

9.1.2 The Chair noted that representatives of the Committee continue to work with the Hazardous Substance Advisory Committee (HSAC) on copper in the environment.

9.1.3 The Chair noted his thanks to Members, Secretariat, HSE, Advisers and Assessors for their work in 2020.

**Rachel Merrick  
ECP Secretariat  
January 2021**