

The UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP)

Full Minutes of the meeting of the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP) held 26 January 2021

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 Prof M Whelan

Assessors:

Dr S Jess (representing the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland); Ms G Reay (representing Scottish Government); Mr D Williams (Defra) 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) and Dr C Snaith (HSE)

Others:

Ms P Croft (HSE); Mr D Griffin (HSE); Ms C Nicholls (Defra) and Ms M Salmon (HSE);

Apologies:

Dr J Garratt; Ms M Wade (HSE)

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 as they were aware their employer had previously been involved with an active substance that would be discussed within the meeting. As they had not been involved in this work, it was decided this was a non-personal, specific conflict and they could remain and participate in discussion on the relevant agenda item.

Agenda Item 2: Full Minutes of the previous meeting [ECP 1 (41/2021)]

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

Agenda Item 3: Matters arising and Forward Business Plan [ECP 2 (41/2021)]

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.

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

Agenda item 4: Independent Scientific Advice: Isoflucypram

4.1 Isoflucypram was first considered by the Committee in July 2019, where issues requiring Independent Scientific Advice were identified by HSE. At the September 2019 meeting, Members were able to finalise their advice on a number of areas of the dossier where further information was not required. At the November 2020 meeting, Members considered additional information that had been received. Committee Members considered the questions put to them for isoflucypram and began to formulate their advice for the remaining areas.

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

Action: Secretariat

Agenda item 5: National Action Plan: Stakeholder consultation [ECP 4 41/2021)]

5.1 Defra introduced this item and informed the Committee that they have produced a draft revised National Action Plan (NAP) for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides. The

revised NAP aims to increase uptake of IPM and sustainable crop production in line with Defra's 25-Year Environmental Plan, the Welsh Minister's Natural Resources Policy, The Environment Strategy for Scotland and the goals of the Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland. A public consultation is currently running and ECP are invited to provide their views as part of the consultation. The Consultation sets out 27 questions covering 5 areas (better regulation, IPM, targets and metrics, delivery of the NAP and safe and responsible use). There are also some 'catch all' questions that allow feedback on broader issues and allow for Members not to be limited to just those questions in their response.

5.2 Members discussed a number of issues with Defra and the Devolved Administrations including: the background to development of the Plan; strategic approaches and how best to monitor progress and outcomes. The Secretariat asked for comments from Members by 10 February to enable an ECP response to be prepared for submission to the consultation.

Action: Committee Members

Agenda item 6: International Engagement: update on ongoing work

6.1 HSE informed the Committee that they have been working with Defra and others on international engagement. Activity here considers a number of areas, amongst other things: keeping up to date with decisions from other regulatory jurisdictions and the information behind these; participating in international regulatory and related scientific discussions; considering changes in international regulatory methodology and guidance and mechanisms for developing GB guidance. The Committee will be kept informed as this work progresses.

6.2 Members noted that UK Government has increased engagement with OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) over the last 2 years and now lead on specific projects. They will continue to do this where appropriate.

6.3 Members also noted that:

- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) had formal international groups which UK can remain involved with following EU Exit.
- it would be possible to look at other routes for mutual or unilateral recognition processes with other competent regulatory authorities.
- OECD and Commonwealth initiatives that may assist UK Government activity related to this issue.

Agenda item 7: Date of next meeting

7.1 9 March 2021 – full business meeting – to be held virtually.

Agenda item 8: Any other business

8.1 First UK authorisation of product containing active substance new to the UK: 'Vintec' [ECP 5 (41/2021)]

8.1.1 HSE introduced a paper for information relating to an application for the first authorisation in the UK for 'Vintec' (contains *Trichoderma atroviride* (strain SC1)) as a fungicide for use on outdoor wine grapes. The Committee noted the authorisation.

8.2 Harmonised Risk Indicator reports [ECP 6 (41/2021)]

8.2.1 HSE introduced the UK Harmonised Risk Indicators (HRI). The indicators had been produced by HSE as part of the legislation that applied during the transition period following EU Exit.

8.2.2 The limitations of these indicators are widely recognised and ECP endorses this view. Government will consider whether they should be refined and how they fit with the wider suite of indicators designed to determine what, how and why pesticides are being applied and their environmental and human health impacts.

8.3 ECP Annual Report 2020

8.3.1 Members noted a draft of the Committee's 2020 Annual Report. Comments are to be sent to the Secretariat by 12 February 2021.

Action: Committee Members

8.4 Chair's Report

8.4.1 The Chair noted that the first meeting of the ECP Business Management Group (BMG) was held on 25 January. The BMG has evolved as a more formal group of the ECP Liaison Group which met to manage the trial process for providing Independent Scientific Advice post EU Exit. The group will continue to monitor the process and how ECP business is arranged.

8.4.2 Following earlier collaboration with Hazardous Substances Advisory Committee (HSAC) on copper in the environment, The Chair has been informed by HSAC that due to other work commitments this work will be put on hold until April 2021. An update will be provided when it progresses.

8.4.3 At the end of 2021, a number of Committee Members are due to leave the ECP having completed their full 10-year term. All of the current toxicology experts are included in these Members, therefore a recruitment campaign for toxicology candidates will be started soon to ensure that the successful candidates are able to have at least a 2 meeting overlap with the current members. For the remaining recruitment needs a paper will be brought to the March meeting with proposals for how to proceed.

Action: Secretariat

**Rachel Merrick
ECP Secretariat
March 2021**