

Spring 2018

President's Address

In the January edition of the IBMA Newsletter I looked ahead into 2018 with mentioning new developments and the continued growth of our industry. I also zoomed in at registration of plant protection products, particularly on the need to develop a more appropriate legislation for biocontrol products.

About half of the new active substances now applied for in the EU are coming from our sector. And I believe this percentage will only increase. In 2017 only six new actives have been approved in the EU and 5 of them are microorganisms! Three of those were classified as low risk substances. Six basic substances were approved as well. This illustrates the new plant protection products are mainly coming from the biocontrol industry. In the USA this can even be more prominently proven by the number of biocontrol products: early 2018 60 biopesticides were pending for approval, being 36-37 microbials, 17 biochemicals, 3- 4 PIPS (plant-incorporated protectants). This number is the highest ever. Plant protection is changing, no doubts. But can regulation keep up with this new development, are the laws still appropriate? What will the Refit conclusion be on the functioning of Reg. 1107/2009? We can almost predict the outcome.

In this context IBMA continues to strive for an improvement of the processes to get our products timely on the market. You can read more on these activities below in both David's and my addresses.

The European Parliament has set up a Special Committee to look into the EU's authorisation procedure for pesticides

The low risk dossier

My file on low risk procedures in 2018 is getting rather thick already, many documents and emails have been written and sent. I will update you on this. The last half year we have witnessed many contentious debates in the political arena and the media on a few conventional pesticides, and decisions have been taken about withdrawals of these products from the market in the EU.

As a consequence the EP has set up a Special Committee on the Union's authorisation procedure for pesticides, called PEST, to investigate procedures, transparency, scientific quality, independence, etc. Recommendations to improve the system will be made when necessary before the end of the year.

In France a similar committee OPECST was set up by the parliament and senate which is performing such a study as well. IBMA and PA are in the process of contacting these committees to inform them about the Resolution on biological low risk pesticides and a fast track procedure so that this can be taken into the analysis as well. Our focus is on the EP as well as on Member States that in the light of all these developments will support the Resolution and have a solution for low risk actives before the end of 2018.



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We are also still waiting for the publication and discussion in the Council of the report of the Working Group on Sustainable Plant Protection which was initiated by the Netherlands. Via contacts with the Ctgb and the Ministry of Agriculture we are trying to have this report published soon. We feel that something is moving in the regulatory environment and that low risk is more and more on the agenda so that the farmers' toolkit can be kept filled with solutions for a sustainable agriculture. Also in DG Agri, DG Envi and DG RTD we notice that it is time for a change.

To further this PA and IBMA have developed a roadmap for this year on our lobby for the low risk procedure. We hope to have some high level meetings in Brussels and possibly other capitals to gain momentum for our goal. We both agree that it has to happen in 2018 and we are positive about this.



*IBMA President
Willem
Ravensberg
opening the
Annual
Assembly 2017*

*Discussion at the Executive Committee Meeting
on 16th May in Leuven*

IBMA Internal meetings

In January as well as in May we have held our Executive Committee (EC) meetings. At both occasions we also convened "National Groups meet the EC". Minutes of the EC can be found on our website section "for members only". The NG and EC discussed and informed each other on regulatory issues like Refit and our lobbying activities; communication was on the agenda as was the project with EBIC and closer collaboration with the biostimulant sector.

In some National Groups the definition of biopesticides have come up in contacts with authorities. France has made quite some progress and the authority has now established official definitions and a list of biocontrol products. Other countries are working on this as well and as IBMA we try to harmonize this as much as we can. Also, for our association there is a need to have clear definitions and terminology and Ulf and David are updating a 2013 document to direct this discussion. Also on a global level, in BioProtection Global, this need has been identified.

The Annual Assembly was held on May 17 in Leuven to present the 2017 IBMA accounts. It was approved by the present members. The attendance was low as only members who have a position in IBMA were present. The Board offers members to present topics for discussion and we encourage you to take this opportunity. Next year's Assembly will be in Leuven again on May 16th – *date and exact location to be confirmed* –.



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BioControl Events

Two biocontrol conferences were held in March. The BPIA 2018 Spring Meeting & International Symposium took place near San Diego in the USA. Annexed to it was the Biocontrols USA West 2018 Conference and Tradeshow, jointly organized by BPIA and Meister Media. An interesting programme was offered to a mixed audience of nearly 400 distributors, crop consultants, and growers. The BioProtection Global meeting was attended by representatives of four of the member associations. Topics were strategy, harmonization and outreach. The need to incorporate biostimulants in our outreach was tabled as well as taking them up in the various associations. On a global level we see this trend of joining both biocontrol products and biostimulants in one organization and having them regulated in an appropriate way.

Biocontrol Africa was organized by New Ag International and 2BMonthly in Nairobi in Kenya, in conjunction with SABO and IBMA. It was the first Africa-wide meeting for the biocontrol industry and it was exciting to see the opportunities for biocontrol in Kenya and further in Africa. A very interesting programme was offered with presenters from around the globe. A next meeting is foreseen in 2020, most likely in West Africa.

A second BioControl Latam will be held in Colombia on November 14-16 as The Largest International Event to Cover Biocontrol in Latin America. The expectations are high as we see biocontrol developing fast in South America.

IBMA-EBIC collaboration

The talks with EBIC continued in 2018, first with an inter-board meeting in February to develop a programme in which members of both associations would be participating. It was decided to have inter-member task forces on three important topics, namely strategy, organization and finance. These were chosen as the critical steps in a potential merger. The scenario of a merger was selected as being the most difficult option and to work on that. Other scenarios of closer collaboration were seen as less difficult and that those could be extrapolated from the work on a merger.

During March members from both IBMA and EBIC were invited to join these talks and 12 members from each were appointed by the boards for the so called IMTF meeting. Those members represented all types of member companies, taking into account size, technology, and region. We came together on April 18-19 in the Sheraton near Brussels airport. Intense discussions were held on the topics referred to in 3 IMTFs and in plenary sessions over these two days, including a working dinner. Participants had received a whole package of information from both associations to be prepared for the challenges. On some topics alignment on positions was found, others were parked for the moment and on some positions we did hardly come closer. And between the three topics finance proved to be the more contentious one. In a closing session Giuseppe Natale and I tried to draw conclusions based on the outcome of the three IMTFs. Since many issues remain on the table we could not come to a completion of the days. The outcome was taken to an Interboard teleconference the following week and we came to the following result, and here I quote from the email that was sent to all members of both EBIC and IBMA on May 14:



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Following deliberations within each board after the IMTF meetings, the IBMA and EBIC Interboard convened to arrive at some interim conclusions. Our joint understanding at this stage in the talks is that our currently unresolved differences, particularly around organizational structure and the financing of operations, require further reflection and work. We therefore agreed that it would be premature to make formal proposals on merging or any other forms of closer collaboration to you now. Instead, we intend to further develop the constructive working alliance we have built, with a view to resolving the difficulties we encountered during the talks, if possible. We have acquired valuable knowledge and understanding of each other and have much to gain from deepening these as we go forward. Most importantly, we are agreed that the alignment we have discovered at the fundamental level of our common strategic goals and business interests holds real promise and needs to be leveraged. We will inform you in due course of any progress made in this direction.

The outcome has recently been discussed in the ECM and with the NG Heads. A proposal for collaboration with EBIC is now under evaluation. A period of reflection is needed and we intend to inform you on further steps after the summer break. With this I want to thank all members who actively played a role in this project, without your efforts this would not have been possible. Finally, I refer to our website where you can find all communication on the page [IBMA-EBIC Project](#).

Future of IBMA governance

Soon IBMA will open the proceedings for nomination of candidates for the Board positions of President and Treasurer. Ralf Ehlers and myself will step down from these positions since we are no longer eligible after three periods according to our statutes. I hereby call on member companies to present candidates for both positions. I call specially on SMEs to consider this seriously since our membership consists of 80% SME active members. Your representation is a necessity in the good governance of IBMA. I hope we have a number of candidates from which capable persons can be elected after the summer. The position of Executive Director also becomes vacant in 2019 and soon we will publish a job description. Please consider candidature for this crucial position in IBMA or provide that announcement to suitable persons you may know. The goals of IBMA need to be guaranteed by this partial renewal of important governance positions in the year to come. All members are called on to reflect on this and assist the association where possible and relevant.

Wishing you a fine Spring and Summer!

Willem Ravensberg



IBMA Team, the National Groups met the Executive Committee in Leuven on 17th May

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Executive Director's Address

REFIT

The REFIT exercise required within the legislation continues to occupy IBMA attention particularly for our Regulatory Consultant Ulf Heilig and myself. In late March we had one of 60 face to face interviews with the consultants Ecorys. At this meeting Ulf and I were principally called to answer questions for clarifying our responses. As we had prepared draft answers to the questions submitted a few days previously, the consultants conducted a more productive open session. We were able to fully discuss our concerns with the legislation and its impact on our members.

A second workshop has been held on the 16th May which was attended by Ulf Heilig. The consultants produced a draft report which has been published on our website. We have updated the IBMA input following that workshop. Our issues get raised but there are more issues being mentioned which support our initiative to pursue changes to the legislation for low-risk biological PPPs outside the REFIT exercise. The consultants report will be reviewed in the EU Commission and a report will be compiled by them for submission to the EU Parliament. This is expected in the first half of 2019. Both the Parliament and the Commission are due to be elected / nominated in the second half of 2019. The priority given by these 2 newly installed bodies and any proposals are unknown quantities.

IBMA will continue to monitor the REFIT issue and look for appropriate opportunities to push the case for proportionate regulation for biocontrol products.



Copa and Cogeca / IBMA Roadmap

We are finalising the new roadmap between our two organisations. Most importantly, both organisations saw an advantage in extending our co-operation not by the three years originally planned but till 2025. This demonstrates the belief we both have that our future success relies on us working together. The new roadmap will shortly be found on our website and contains the three areas we have worked on till now: finding joint solutions to problems, support of the EU Minor Use Co-ordination Facility (MUCF) and the activities of bringing low-risk biological PPPs to the market more quickly. It now however also contains a new section which is aimed at delivering proportionate regulation for biocontrol solutions. It covers REFIT but also activities outside REFIT and is to be led by IBMA. National Groups of both associations are also now engaged in delivering the objectives of the roadmap which should encourage co-operation between our two organisations at several levels and bring similar activities to the National, Regional and European levels.

Minor Use Meetings

IBMA has participated in meetings and activities of the EU MUCF during the early part of this year. The Minor Use Co-ordination Facility has held a stakeholder meeting where some IBMA members were invited to give a presentation on future products they have of interest to the solving of minor use needs across Europe. A MUCF series of Commodity Group and Horizontal Group meetings were held and attended in part by both Ulf and myself as well as some IBMA members. If you have not done so acquaint yourself with the IBMA Minor Uses section on the website. It contains some valuable information and links including to the MUCF website.

Minor Uses are extremely important to IBMA members and many of the products our industry is producing and it gives opportunities to collaborate with Member States, Grower Groups, etc. to bring products to some markets quickly at a reduced cost. I have also been working with the MUCF to develop guidance in processing a minor use need into a project and then through regulation to become a solution for farmers in Member States.

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ECPA Regulatory Meeting

IBMA were represented at the ECPA Regulatory Meeting by myself and Ulf Heilig. I was invited to give a presentation in a Parallel Session on the first day entitled “SUD, IPM and low-risk”. The presentation received many questions and was said to be one of the more interesting and engaging talks. During the plenary session we heard from Klaus Berend (Head of Pesticides Unit DG Sante) that, despite the wording in the regulation saying that there was an obligation to deliver a report on the functioning of the regulation which could include possible suggestions for improvement, he was amazed that people do not seem to understand that a review is limited to a diagnosis of the functioning of the regulation.

Member States and EFSA gave their views on the functioning of the regulation. There was also a special session on the way forward after Brexit where within Central Zone there is divided opinion as to what is and is not possible after the UK leaves the EU. One thing is for sure: the UK Competent Authority CRD handles a significant number of authorisations and capacity will need to be found to fill any vacuum left. It is obvious with the increasing success of this meeting over the years that regulatory participation in a specialist meeting is enhanced by having a Brussels venue.

SUD Symposium

2018 saw IBMA alongside its longstanding symposium partners PAN Europe and IOBC tackle the issue of arable crops. IOBC took the line of pursuing issues of soil health and residual contamination related to a lack of biodiversity. The session was presented by specialist scientists and though considered slightly long and highly detailed by IBMA representatives was well received by the gathered audience, host and chair. IBMA had young industry representatives showing that there is interest from future generations and innovation is certainly happening and the arable sector has not been left behind!

PAN invited an IPM farmer to show the importance of tools being used in a holistic fashion and were commended for taking this route rather than relying on an organic farmer to put across their message. The Chair Michael Hammel summed up by saying there appears to have been some more progress this year than in the past with the implementation of the SUD but equally the EU Commission may have escaped lightly as, due to time constraints, the representative of DG Sante did not need to face questions. More information, including the presentations, can be found on [IBMA Events page](#).



IBMA members Biocare and Koppert presented biocontrol solutions at the 6th SUD Symposium Debate on Integrated Pest Management

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IBMA Members Survey

IBMA have now compiled a report based on the survey data received from the black box survey conducted by Philips McDougall on behalf of ourselves and BPIA.

Quantification of market size was not possible due to the response level of the survey. However some trends and more general but still highly valuable information has been able to be extracted from the data generated. For instance, we are able to confirm that our industry consists of 80% SME (Small Medium Enterprises) which can be quite helpful as in Europe special provision to study the impact and protect the interests of SMEs has been undertaken. We were able to confirm that the industry does indeed have double digit growth.

In Europe we have a diverse reliance on our biocontrol tools with the highest level of use being with Macrobiales. This bodes well for the implementation of IPM which is often possible in Europe through multiple biocontrol tools being used in a system. Growth across the different sectors was also not uniform and we have seen the highest growth in Europe in the Natural Products sector followed closely by Microbiales. IBMA will repeat the survey in the near future and will be relying on members for a more complete response than the last time as strongly supported at the 2017 AGM in Basel.



ABIM 2017 was the most successful ABIM on record - make sure you are part of ABIM 2018 !

ABIM

As reported previously ABIM 2017 was our most successful ABIM on record. For 2018 we are preparing for an ABIM that can expand and continue to give a great experience for our sponsors, exhibitors and delegates. Alongside Basel Messe we have designed an exhibition hall where all our exhibitors are in the same space. This means all exhibitors are in the one hall with easy access when assembling and dismantling there stands and will have the delegates in attendance across the time of the conference and exhibition. All meals will be served in the exhibition hall and casual seating and tables will be provided.

The one to one meeting service is used by a significant group of people and it will be bigger and more accessible this year. Even more informal meeting spaces will be made available as the Steering Committee recognise the fact that the main reason delegates cite as coming to ABIM is networking.

The Bernard Blum Award nominations and the call for "Offered Talks" will be made shortly so stay tuned and do respond as both of these serve to showcase what our members are doing and the product developments we have for the future. By the way did you see the newflash telling you the ABIM 2018 early bird booking is now open!

I hope the Spring and Summer of 2018 are profitable ones for you and your business,

David Cary

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