PROPOSED PRODUCTION OF A KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER STRATEGY

Introduction

The mechanisms by which users, distributors and advisers are notified of key information requirements in the use of pesticides are extremely complicated. There is a need to review these arrangements to ensure the way in which knowledge gaps are identified and addressed is as effective as possible.

Previously the Pesticides Forum had a specific Knowledge Transfer Project Group chaired by Dr Keith Dawson. This last reported in 2005. Given the development and introduction of the UK Pesticides Strategy, and the proposed EU Thematic Strategy on the sustainable use of pesticides, it is proposed that PSD and the Forum undertake a wide review of the arrangements for transferring information and develop a Knowledge Transfer (KT) Strategy to guide future activity across the Pesticides Strategy. The KT Strategy will cover:

- Key information requirements for users, distributors and advisors and the mechanisms by which they can notify relevant stakeholders of knowledge gaps and how relevant advice is distributed.
- the mechanisms by which the outcome of R&D/new developments is conveyed to users, distributors and advisors;

Forum members are invited to provide any preliminary comments on this approach and the areas listed below for consideration. PSD will use any comments to draft a Knowledge Transfer Strategy for consideration by the Forum.

Background
Section 11 of the UK Pesticides Strategy highlights the importance of a strong scientific base and effective mechanisms of knowledge transfer to the success of the strategy. The strategy outlines how Knowledge Transfer is vital in bringing new technologies and carrying forward the outcomes of R&D in the form of advice to users. The Pesticides Forum is identified as having an important advisory role on knowledge transfer issues.

Defra spends around £5m each year on four areas of research and development relevant to pesticides:
- Support to regulatory work, including better ways to assess and manage risks;
- Support to government policy to protect human health and the environment; (including more sustainable crop protection practices and ways to protect biodiversity);
- Work on alternative plant protection technologies, integrated approaches and resistance;
- Support to monitoring and enforcement activity.

Areas to be considered
There are a number of key areas to be investigated:

- **Messages to promote** – the Code of Practice for the use of pesticides gives a number of headings from which messages can be drawn eg Product availability, Resistance Management, Training (can be differentiated for users, distributors and advisors, including the need for continuous professional development), Maintenance of equipment (regular testing and on-going checks), etc

- **Existing sources of advice and how they are disseminated** eg the key role of advisors, use of websites, leaflets etc and the preferred method of communications by specific target audiences, syllabuses of training courses for users, distributors and advisors, etc

- **Recently completed R&D and how knowledge transfer is addressed** eg specific KT methods used on completion of projects, and more general ones such as R&D Newsletters from PSD or other R&D funding bodies

- **Recently commissioned R&D and how knowledge transfer is addressed** eg examination of KT methods proposed in recently commissioned R&D

- **How are knowledge gaps identified and what mechanisms are there for addressing these** – can a more strategic approach be taken rather than the current seemingly ad hoc one?

These, and any other areas identified, will be considered to produce the KT Strategy document, and to build on the Forum’s previous work in this area.

PSD
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