FIRST MEETING OF THE PESTICIDES FORUM, 23 MAY 1996 AT THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, 2 MARSHAM STREET, LONDON

1. Those present

Those attending are listed at Annex A.

2. Introductions

Members were welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman who briefly reviewed the background to the establishment of the Forum and discussed its Terms of Reference (Annex B).

Several members expressed disappointment that other interested groups were not represented including organic farming, the Environment Agency and union groups. It was pointed out that Ministers wanted the size of the Forum kept to a manageable size and that other organisations could be invited to meetings on an ad hoc basis when relevant issues were covered.

The need for dissemination of information to other groups was discussed. An address list of interested parties is held by the secretariat and the proceedings of the Forum will be distributed to all those who wish to see them. It was suggested that a newsletter could be produced reporting the Forum’s activities. This point will be explored by the secretariat.

ACTION: SECRETARIAT

3. Organisational Matters (Paper PF1)

There was general agreement amongst the members that the Forum should meet more than twice a year. The next meeting will be held on 2 October 1996 in London at MAFF offices (details to be notified).

It was agreed that updates on developments from members should be in the form of short written reports rather than a table round discussion at each meeting. There was general agreement that the proposed issues for discussion were appropriate. Other issues suggested were:

i) a presentation from the Environment Agency on the risks to the environment associated with pesticides and ways of reducing them;

ii) waste disposal including recycling of pesticides packaging;

iii) EU initiatives on the use of pesticides;
iv) the scope of other committees and the Forum’s relationship with these (it was agreed that the secretariat would produce a paper).

**ACTION: SECRETARIAT**

v) the role and work of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides

The Forum agreed that it would be helpful to spotlight a series of initiatives related to pesticide minimisation such as the NFU/Retailer Crop Protocols, The Game Conservancy Trust’s conservation headland initiative and the BAA/ATB Landbase/Sainsburys/ LEAF ICM training pack, at subsequent meetings.

On R&D, it was felt that a list of projects relevant to the Forum’s work would be helpful. This will be provided by the secretariat.

**ACTION: SECRETARIAT**

There was discussion on the scope of the Forum’s work. There was some feeling that the Forum should address use of non-agricultural pesticides and biocides as well as agricultural pesticides. However, it was accepted that the membership would need to be considerably widened for it to be able to do this and that different actions were likely to be needed to minimise the use of non-agricultural pesticides. It was agreed the Forum would not ignore non-agricultural/horticultural pesticide use issues but ensure that they were referred to a more appropriate group.


It was agreed by the members that the main outcome of the Forum should be the development of the Pesticide Action Plan which, with Government support, will need to be put in practice by all concerned with pesticide use.

The draft Action Plan currently falls into three broad areas:

i) **Encouraging Adoption of Pesticide Minimisation Techniques**

There was a general feeling that, as well as ICM, other systems such as organic farming and LIFE needed to be considered and that some form of auditing or accreditation of practitioners was needed.

There was discussion of definitions of ICM although most members felt that the definition was not as significant as the process.

It was felt that farmers needed to be convinced that there was something new to be done as many of them considered that they were already farming according to ICM principles. Information needed to be fed down to the farm level, supported by improved training of advisers and by new technology, e.g. computerised decision support systems.
The possibility of using cross-compliance between CAP support and agri-environment measures was considered but this was felt to be impractical at this stage.

It was agreed that there could be no set of rules for all farmers, due to climatic and geographical influences, but that an overall package needed to be developed from which farmers could select as appropriate.

ii) Training, Guidance and Extension

The best way of getting the message of responsible pesticide use across was discussed. It was thought that paper communication was not very effective and that face to face contact was better, although more expensive. It was felt that advice to farmers through the extension services and by the use of demonstration sites was important. Advisors and lecturers needed to be trained appropriately and kept up to date with the latest information on research results and developments in ICM. The distributors and agricultural supply industry also had a key role to play.

It was considered that much could be learnt from European initiatives, such as those in the Netherlands.

The possibility of making information on the in-season development of pests and disease problems more widely available to farmers was discussed, it was pointed out that there are commercial interests involved and that professional crop advisory services were available.

The use of the Internet to provide information to farmers was suggested, as was the need for a fast-track approval system for low technology solutions to pest control.

iii) Reporting to the ACP

A report will be prepared for the meeting of the ACP in July 1996 giving details of changing patterns of pesticide use and an overview of the Forum’s progress so far. The ACP’s reactions will be reported to the Forum at its October meeting.

ACTION: SECRETARIAT

There was some criticism that the ACP’s packaging and labelling group had been disbanded. It was pointed out that this group had not necessarily been disbanded permanently and could be reformed if it was considered appropriate.

The secretariat would develop further the Action Plan in the light of the discussions.

ACTION: SECRETARIAT
5. **ADAS survey of farmers and growers on IPM/ICM techniques**  
*Paper PF2/1*

Ms Parham gave a short presentation on the survey being carried out for DoE of the awareness, use and promotion of IPM/ICM techniques amongst farmers and growers. The survey will provide a baseline of current activity/attitudes in this area.

Around 1200 farmers/growers have returned analysable questionnaires representing a 26% response rate. The results are currently being analysed. Initial indications are that their are clear differences between sectors in their awareness and understanding of IPM/ICM techniques and that the main barriers to uptake of new techniques are their availability, the practicality of implementation, and the cost. These inferences will need to be confirmed by further analysis. A final report will be available at the end of July and the survey results will be discussed again at the next meeting.

There was much interest in the survey, which it was thought should be combined with pesticide usage data to give a broad overview of the current situation on pest control.

6. **Publicity Co-ordination (Paper PF3)**

PSD’s publicity plans were summarised. Proposals for leaflets on pesticide use in the home and garden and on spray application machinery were welcomed by the Forum.

It was suggested that guidance on no spray zones was also needed. This area is currently under scientific policy review.

To co-ordinate publicity activities most effectively, members were invited to provide the secretariat with details of publicity plans for the next six months. The secretariat will collate these into a paper for the next meeting.

**ACTION: MEMBERS/SECRETARIAT**

7. **Overview of MAFF R&D relating to Minimisation of Pesticides Use**

Mrs Hignett gave a presentation of relevant MAFF R&D covering work funded by MAFF’s Food Science and Safety Group and its Arable Crops and Horticulture Group, totalling around £17m per annum. The LINK programmes on Horticulture and Technology for Sustainable Farming Systems were also covered. Particular projects highlighted were Boxworth, SCARAB, TALISMAN, semi-chemicals and the Decision Support System for Arable Crops. Examples of current research include work on pesticide resistance, residues, alternative methods of crop protection, on biocides and on the environmental, ecological and economic effects of lower input systems. A considerable amount of work is also being undertaken on decision support systems, for which it is hoped that software could be in place by the year 2000, not earlier, as it is important to gather together all the essential supporting data within the software.
The Forum agreed that it would be helpful to have brief overviews by other sponsors of R&D at subsequent meetings.

8. Final Discussion

The Actions from the meeting were summarised (see Annex C). The priorities identified for the Forum were:

i) developing measures for recording the effectiveness of minimisation policies and establishing goals for these policies;

ii) information on the environmental impact of individual pesticides;

iii) a definition of the principles of ICM that is helpful to farmers and growers;

iv) auditing and accreditation of ICM and IPM schemes;

v) involving colleges, training groups and farmer advisers in the Action Plan;

vi) setting a menu of options rather than prescriptive rules for IPM and ICM;

vii) training (Dr Carter indicated that she was willing to survey briefly university and colleges on current activity/knowledge, Mr Orme was willing to do likewise for BASIS members)

**ACTION: DR CARTER/MR ORME**

It was agreed that members should write to Dr Croxford outlining those issues (up to 4) which they saw as the most important priorities for the Forum, accompanied by a short note of the action currently being taken by their organisation in areas relative to the Forum’s activities. These notes, which should be succinct, should be made available to the Secretariat by the end of June. The information will be collated into a paper for the next meeting.

**ACTION: MEMBERS/SECRETARIAT**

Press releases on the first meeting of the Forum and PSD’s booklet "Pesticides and Integrated Farming" were distributed.

The Chairman thanked members for their constructive contribution to the debate.
THOSE PRESENT AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PESTICIDES FORUM

Chairman
Dr David Shannon  Chief Scientist for Agriculture, MAFF

Members
Dr Andrée Carter  Advisory Committee on Pesticides
Mr Tony Pike  British Agrochemicals Association
Dr Keith Dawson  United Kingdom Agricultural Supply Trade Association
Mr Ron Saunders  Agricultural Engineers Association
Dr David Brightman  National Farmers' Union
Dr Alan Woods  Country Landowners Association
Mr Charles Russell  Scottish Farmers' Union
Mrs Helen Bower  Women's Farming Union
Mr Peter Beaumont  The Pesticides Trust
Dr John Holland  The Game Conservancy Trust
Mr David Richardson  Linking Environment and Farming
Mr John Terry  Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Mr John Foley  Fresh Produce Consortium/British Retail Consortium
Mr Jim Orson  ADAS
Dr Stuart Wale  Scottish Agricultural College
Mr Barrie Orme  BASIS Registration Ltd

Presenters
Mrs Rosemary Hignett  MAFF
Ms Colette Parham  ADAS

Observers
Mr Geoff Bruce  Pesticides Safety Directorate
Dr Peter Corcoran  Department of the Environment
Mr Tony Cronin  Department of Trade and Industry
Dr Peter Dibb  Department of Health
Mr John Bouckley  Health and Safety Executive
Mr Roy McLachlan  Scottish Office
Ms Lynn Griffiths  Welsh Office
Mr Brian Murphy  Department of Agriculture, Northern Ireland

Secretariat
Dr Andy Croxford  Department of the Environment
Mr Matthew Wells  Pesticides Safety Directorate
ANNEX B

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PESTICIDES FORUM

To bring together the views of those concerned with the use and effects of pesticides, to identify their common interests and to assist in the effective dissemination of best practice, advances in technology and R&D results and to advise Government on the promotion and implementation of its policy relating to the responsible use of pesticides.
ANNEX C

ACTION LIST

SECRETARIAT

1. Explore the feasibility of and need for a newsletter of the Forum’s activities.

2. Produce a paper on the scope of other committees involved with the use of pesticides and their relationship with the Forum for the next meeting.

3. Provide a list of R&D projects relevant to the Forum’s work for the next meeting.


5. Redraft the Action Plan in the light of the Forum’s discussions for the next meeting.

6. Collate member’s publicity plans for the next six months into a paper for the next meeting.

7. Collate member’s priorities and action by the organisations they represent on the responsible use of pesticides into a paper for the next meeting.

MEMBERS

1. Provide the secretariat with details of publicity plans on the use of pesticides for the next six months by end June.

2. By end June, provide Dr Croxford with details of key priorities for their organisation and action taken by them to promote the responsible use of pesticides.

3. Dr Carter and Mr Orme to survey briefly university and colleges, and BASIS members respectively on current pesticide minimisation activity/knowledge.