IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 4.1 OF THE SUSTAINABLE USE DIRECTIVE: USE/RISK REDUCTION INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Background

1. Article 4.1 of the recently agreed directive on the sustainable use of pesticides contains provisions requiring specific indicators and use/risk reduction targets for active substances/products in certain circumstances. Ministers now need to consider the range of options to implement this provision and discussion by the Pesticides Forum will contribute to this, as will comments from the forthcoming public consultation on implementation of the Directive.

2. The relevant wording in the directive is:

Member States shall adopt National Action Plans to set up their quantitative objectives, targets, measures and timetables to reduce risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment and to encourage the development and introduction of integrated pest management and of alternative approaches or techniques in order to reduce dependency on the use of pesticides. These targets may cover different areas of concern, for example worker protection, protection of the environment, residues, use of specific techniques or use in specific crops.

The National Action Plans shall also include indicators to monitor the use of plant protection products containing active substances of particular concern, especially if alternatives are available. Member States shall give particular attention to the plant protection products containing active substances approved in accordance with Council Directive 91/414/EEC of 15 July 1991 concerning the placing of plant products on the market which, when subject to renewal of approval under Regulation (EC) No [new ppp regulation] will not fulfil the criteria relevant for approval laid down in Annex II, points 3.6 to 3.8 of that Regulation.

On the basis of such indicators and taking into account where applicable the risk or use reduction targets achieved already prior to the application of this Directive, timetables and targets for the reduction of use shall also be established, in particular if the reduction of use constitutes an appropriate means to achieve risk reduction with regard to priority items identified under Article 15(2)(c) [the examples here are active substances, crops, regions or practices that require attention or good practices that can be used as examples in order to achieve the objectives of the directive]. These targets may be intermediate or final. Member States shall use all necessary means designed to achieve these targets.

The rationale for this in the related recital in the directive is:

National Action Plans aimed at setting quantitative objectives, targets, measures, timetables and indicators to reduce risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment and at encouraging the development and introduction of integrated pest management and of alternative approaches or techniques in order to reduce dependency on the use of pesticides should be used by Member States in
order to facilitate the implementation of this Directive. Member States should monitor the use of plant protection products containing active substances of particular concern and establish timetables and targets for the reduction of their use, in particular when it is an appropriate means to achieve risk reduction targets. National Action Plans should be coordinated with implementation plans under other relevant Community legislation and could be used for grouping together objectives to be achieved under other Community legislation related to pesticides.

**Issues to consider**

Given there is a clear expectation by the Commission and European Parliament for Member States to take action in this area, there is a need to consider how this provision can be used to take forward the risk reduction element of the UK Pesticides Strategy. The discussion at the October Pesticides Forum meeting will look at this, and the following questions (not exhaustive) may help focus the discussions.

- Are there specific risk areas (e.g. specific crops, types of pesticides used, situations or locations, application techniques, handling or disposal operations) where demonstrable risk reduction would improve on the current UK standards of protection of human health and the environment?

- Could this/ be achieved by the use of such targets/measures?

- How would such target(s) fit in with other elements of the National Action Plan, and be compatible with and complementary to other related existing measures eg WFD implementation?

- What could suitable risk (and possibly leading to use) reduction target(s) look like, bearing in mind the need to be measurable, time-related and achievable?

- Does development of specific indicators require new data sources or can existing ones (eg pesticides usage survey, farm practices survey, Voluntary Initiative data) be used?

- What mechanisms could be employed/would need to be employed to achieve such targets – by industry (eg quotas for active substances) or by Government?

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