BIOPESTICIDES REVIEW: POINTS FOR DISCUSSION BY THE PESTICIDES FORUM

Background

The report from ADAS indicates that there are major barriers to the commercialisation of biopesticides arising in particular from their limited market potential. Nevertheless they contribute to resistance management, can play an important role in Integrated Crop Management and would have an increasing role generally if chemical control options decline as a result of EU pesticide legislation. To support biopesticides the UK government has established the ‘Biopesticides Scheme’ to support applicants, held application fees at below the full-cost rate and funded R&D. With current reductions in government spending there is little prospect of additional support. The current review is being undertaken to take stock of the current position and consider the future commercial prospects for biopesticides as a basis for reviewing the government’s current approach. The Forum is invited to discuss the following points.

Discussion points

What are the prospects for biopesticides? Are there key crops/uses where they are likely to be most important? Are the prospects likely to be heavily influenced by the continuing availability of alternative chemicals? What other factors will have most influence on their future?

The biopesticides industry is concerned over the regulatory barriers to development. Does the Forum have views on how these barriers might be reduced bearing in mind that safety standards have to be maintained?

Defra is currently supporting the SCEPTRE project which is geared towards exploiting the potential of existing biopesticides (as well as chemical pesticides). Does the Forum support the move of R&D funding towards this more applied research than has been the case in the past?

What could the government do to support biopesticides? Do the current arrangements make the best use of available funding? Would the farming industry actually benefit more if the available resource were transferred to supporting off-label approvals generally rather than just biopesticides?