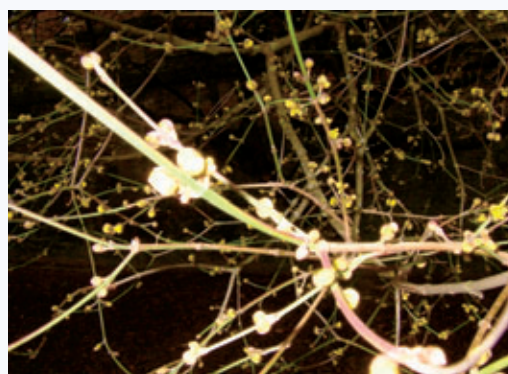


PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

The primary function of the rural world is to feed growing populations with safe products, which has been possible in part thanks to plant protection products (PPPs). The XXIst Century sees the development of another function: the production of fossil fuels alternatives in order to reduce petroleum dependency. Future generations of land managers will thus face an enormous challenge. They will need the means to fulfil this tasks, while making sure that related activities do not adversely affect biodiversity. The era of modern farming has come, and it is inextricably linked to environmental protection and enhancement of local economies and communities.

Farmers and agricultural industries are willing to take responsibility for environmental and health issues through using safe and appropriate technologies and products. **ELO recalls that rural entrepreneurs and landowners are responsible stewards of their land and believe that business, social and environmental performance are mutually dependent. A balanced approach as regards the “Strategy on sustainable use of pesticides” proposed by the EU Commission in 2002 in its Communication is thus necessary.** The Strategy is in the pipelines of the Commission and should come up in the 2nd half of 2006.

ELO supports the use of products that increase output from existing farmland. This contributes to sustainable agriculture by reducing the need to further convert semi-natural habitats for agricultural purposes. New products are being developed for use according to food and sanitary safety requirements within sustainable agriculture and integrated pest management. They have been placed on the market in order to mitigate threats to natural resources and soil and are part of good practices when combined with appropriate cultivation techniques such as conservation tillage or the use of environmental-friendly machinery.



The EU strategy on pesticides aims to reduce the risks from pesticides to farmers, consumers, and the environment whilst maintaining crop productivity. The objectives of the strategy are twofold in targeting both the issue at source with regards to PPPs producers on the one hand, and PPPs users on the other. Members States (MS) are required to improve controls on the use and distribution of pesticides, as well as on the reduction of the levels of harmful active substances, in particular through replacing the most dangerous ones with safer (including non-chemical) alternatives and encouraging the use of low-input crop farming. In addition, MS are required to establish a transparent system for reporting and monitoring progress including the development of appropriate indicators.

Specific Basic Legal Framework

- Plant protection products (PPPs) are covered by **Council Directive 91/414/EEC** defining strict rules for their authorisation. The Directive requires very extensive risk assessments for effects on health and environment to be carried out, before a PPP can be placed on the market and used. A revision of this Directive is scheduled for the 2nd quarter of 2006. Community rules also exist that define **maximum residue limits (MRLs)** on food and feedstuffs.
- The **Biocidal Product Directive (98/8/EC)** aims to provide a high level of protection for humans, animals and the environment and targets the harmonisation of the European market for biocidal products and their active substances.
- Communication ‘**Towards a Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides**’ COM (2002) 349.