

Introduction to the 11th Symposium of the ICPBR Bee Protection Group

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Chairman and local organiser

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I wish you welcome to this 11th symposium of ICPBR Bee Protection Group, welcome to this 3rd symposium in Wageningen, and welcome to the 114 participants from 18 countries. Welcome to representatives from Government authorities, Universities and Research Institutes, Pesticide Industry and Ecotoxicological Test Consultancies, Beekeepers Organisations, private persons.

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and according to the kind of organisation they represent.

Country	Participants	Represented organisation	Participants
Algeria	1	Authorities	16
Austria	1	Beekeepers	8
Belgium	6	Consultancy	6
Brazil	6	Ecotoxicology	20
Canada	1	Government	10
Finland	1	ICPBR	2
France	15	Industry	24
Germany	25	International	2
Italy	8	Universities	26
Japan	1	Total	114
Kenya	5		
Norway	1		
Saudi Arabia	1		
Slovenia	2		
Spain	2		
Switzerland	4		
The Netherlands	18		
UK	16		
Total	114		

The main aim of these symposia is to finally achieve good protection of bees and other pollinators from harmful effects of pesticides by means of legal regulation of pesticide use, by enforcement of regulations, and by monitoring of the effects in practice. Earlier aims of these symposia, harmonisation of testing methods and risk assessment approaches, has been largely realised but still these remain aims of our group. In practice we want to realise these aims through:

- Exchange of information, know-how, methodology
- Signalling new and unexpected problems and solutions
- Harmonising testing methods
- Stimulating international coordination
- Recommendations to national and international authorities in pesticide registration
- All our discussions are or should be science based, using scientific arguments only. No politics in these discussions! Forget your own specific interests; this conference is about the common interest of protecting bees and pollinators only
- In practice of our Bee Protection Group we use to elaborate solutions for specific problems in dedicated working groups that report to this symposium.
- Solutions then are submitted to international organisations: EPPO, OECD, European Commission. And now EFSA as well.

This symposium brings together nearly all expertise in Europe on pesticide risks to bees, and we welcome the representatives from outside Europe (in this symposium from Algeria, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Kenya, Saudi Arabia) to participate in this expertise. We are happy to welcome among this wide expertise the chairman of the current EFSA Working Group on Pollinators, Mr. Robert Luttik, who is invited to give an update of the remit and work of the EFSA group.

The programme comprises three days of presentations and discussions, including half a day for a social programme in order to stimulate the informal contacts between all participants. Half a day is dedicated to reports from our specialised working groups and discussions about their proposals. And on the last day we welcome the FAO project on wild pollinators in the tropics with participants from Brazil, Kenya and the Netherlands that aims to develop practical options to reduce pesticide risks to wild pollinators. The specialised working groups that are developing proposals for practical solutions in realising our protection aims are:

- Risks posed by dusts (coordinator: Rolf Forster)
- Assessment of risks posed by guttation (coordinator: Jens Pistorius)
- Acceptability of effects in field studies (coordinator: Gavin Lewis)
- Acceptable levels of control and toxic reference mortality from in-cage and field tests (coordinator: Christine Vergnet)
- Risk to honeybee larvae (coordinator: Roland Becker)
- Design of post registration monitoring studies for systemic pesticides (coordinator: Anne Alix)

At the end of this symposium there is news about the composition of the board of the Bee Protection Group, and about the place where the next symposium over three years will be held. Finally we think it is important to mention, in order to stress the independence of this ICPBR-symposium, that this year for the first time there is no sponsoring of this symposium by industry. All costs of the symposium are born by the fees of the participants.

But as organisers we want to thank the Julius Kühn Institute in Braunschweig for publishing the proceedings in their series of the Julius-Kühn-Archive without costs to ICPBR, and to thank the Netherlands' Board for the Authorisation of PPPs and Biocides (Ctgb) and the Netherlands' Plant Protection Service (both in Wageningen NL) for their practical support in organising this symposium.

Epilogue

At the end of the symposium on November 4, 2012, Dr. Pieter Oomen announced his departure as a chairman, after participating in the group since 1985 and since taking over the chair from John Stevenson in 2002. He was thanked with a standing ovation by all participants. Also, he indicated to be willing to continue as a member of the board, as well as editor of the proceedings of this symposium.

- A new board for the ICPBR Bee Protection Group then was proposed, as follows:
- Helen Thompson, chairman (FERA, UK)
- Jens Pistorius, secretary (Julius Kühn Institute, D)
- Anne Alix, member (Dow Agrosiences, UK / Ministry Agriculture, F)
- Klaus Wallner, member (University Hohenheim, D)
- Jacoba Wassenberg, member (Ctgb, NL)
- Together with the existing members:
- Gavin Lewis, vice chairman (JSC International Ltd, UK)
- John Stevenson, member (ex chairman, UK)
- Pieter Oomen, member (ex chairman, NL)

These new and old members of the board of the Bee Protection Group were welcomed by the symposium participants with a generous applause.

As final conclusion of the 11th symposium, Prof Guy Smagghe of the University in Ghent, Belgium, invited the participants to a 12th symposium in his city and university for 2014, an invitation greatly welcomed by the new board and all participants.