



High level discussions on Regulatory Issues during the Francophone North African HUB Meeting

“An honest dialogue and good collaboration between the pesticide industry and regulatory services in Francophone North Africa” was the key message by Khadija Id Sidi Yahia, General Director of the National Office for Health Security of Food Products (ONSSA) in Morocco. She spoke during the CropLife HUB meeting for Francophone North Africa that took place on 20 and 21 February 2018 in Rabat, Morocco.

The meeting brought together more than 80 experts from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia representing ministries of agriculture, regulatory authorities, international organizations, and national CropLife associations to exchange information and strategies to enhance regulatory frameworks for pesticides in the Francophone North African countries.

The main objective of the meeting was to enhance the understanding and application of internationally recognized “Principles of Regulation” of pesticides along the respective life cycles including aspects of pesticide registration, monitoring, and enforcement. For Chebil Mehrez, Chairman of CropLife Tunisia, the HUB meetings are an excellent way to create a good relationship between industry and the regulatory services. “These meetings make the regulatory services realise that we are genuinely concerned with the improvement of the agricultural sector and that we are more than companies who would like to sell their products.”

Malika Bounfour, coordinator of the container management project of the FAO in Morocco confirms this: “This meeting has made me realize that the pesticide industry is doing a lot on stewardship and is making an effort to take its social responsibility seriously. I am very much interested in setting up a pilot project of Spray Service Providers, because it sounds like a good way to reduce the risks involved in pesticides.”

At the meeting steps to be considered in handling the Protection of Regulatory Data (PRD) and Confidential Business Information pending the publication of the law in Morocco, were discussed. Other discussions focused on the importance of implementing recommendations of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) on minor changes to product registrations. These changes are usually driven by the need to develop better performing products and or safety considerations, among others.



Above: Khadija Id Sidi Yahia, General Director of the National Office for Health Security of Food Products (ONSSA) during her opening speech



Above: Chebil Mehrez, Chairman of CropLife Tunisia: “HUB meetings are an excellent way to create a good relationship between industry and the regulatory services.”



The third session covered the impact of the European Union (EU) Regulatory Policy Processes on the region, specifically the hazard based criteria on trade standards (Maximum Residue Levels [MRLs] and import tolerances), implementation of the Endocrine Disruptor (ED) criteria, the Glyphosate situation, and pollinator health. The meeting underscored the need to consider conditions of use and application of the risk-based approach, which is the global norm.

During the last session, pesticide risk mitigation experiences through the implementation of the Spray Service Provider programs in Africa Middle East (AME) were presented. Throughout the discussions that followed, participants agreed that it would be advisable to look at existing legislation to see how the SSP concept could fit in and the approach be adapted, if necessary. It was also suggested to check if smaller distributors would be interested to be trained as SSPs and offer their services.

It was the first time that Algeria was present during a CropLife North Africa Hub and Regulatory meeting which was represented by Hadjadj Aoul F/Zohra, the Director General of the National Toxicological Centre in Algiers. She was pleasantly surprised by the high level of discussions: "I have learned a lot on how other countries handle issues on the protection of regulatory data and I became aware that often existing legislation blocks certain innovations in a country. I also appreciated the discussions on the management of empty pesticide containers. I have realized that all of us are dealing with the same problems and that we need to share experiences on possible solutions."

Stella Simiyu Wafukho / Manon Mireille Dohmen



Group Photo

Below: Hadjadj Aoul F/Zohra, the Director General of the National Toxicological Centre in Algiers: "I was pleasantly surprised by the high level of discussions."



Above from left: Samira Amellal (Director General CropLife Africa Middle East), Malika Bounfour (coordinator of the container management project FAO Morocco), and Stella Simiyu Wafukho (Director Regulatory Affairs and Stakeholder Relations).



Recognition of 17 Years Support to the Crop Protection Strategy Council of CropLife International

During the formal dinner held by the Members of the Crop Protection Strategy Council in Brussels on 12 February 2018, the President and CEO of CropLife International, Howard Minigh took the opportunity to thank Rudolf Guyer for the 17 years of dedicated support to the Crop Protection Strategy Council of CropLife International representing the regional association CropLife Africa Middle East. The text on the farewell token handed to Rudolf reads as follows: In recognition of Rudolf Guyer. For outstanding support to the Crop Protection Strategy Council from 2001 to 2017.

Following the receipt of this award, Rudolf Guyer thanked the members of the Strategy Council for their ongoing and excellent support since the creation of CropLife Africa Middle East at the time when the Plant Science Industry adopted the new identity and brand, CropLife in 2001. He placed emphasis on the achievement that the brand, "CropLife" which had successfully been established in our industry across all the countries despite language barriers. Our CropLife association network is the respected and trusted voice representing for the entire Plant Science Industry in Africa Middle East. This is particularly valuable for our advocacy activities with government bodies and International Organizations.

Rudolf then expressed his thanks to Samira Amellal who has accepted the role of leading CropLife Africa Middle East into the future. He appreciated those changes already implemented such as, the visual corporate identity giving the African association a more region-specific image.

He expressed comfort in the fact that with Samira, a young mother who has her roots in Africa, will proudly represent our industry and the modern technological solutions of our member companies. In closing he called on the members of the Strategy Council and on CropLife International to maintain or increase the support to the African association under the new leadership of Samira Amellal.



Rudolf Guyer receiving his recognition of service award from Howard Minigh



Stewardship and Spray Service

CropLife Kenya deploys an additional 24 Spray Service Providers.

The Spray service provider concept is finally getting wider recognition in Kenya's agricultural sector as part of the solution to the responsible use of pesticides especially by small-scale farmers. The Danish embassy in Kenya through a consultant-(Policy and Markets Organization) partnered with CropLife Kenya and the Pest Control Products Board to train 24 farmers as spray service providers. The farmers who are part of the Aberdares Fresh Produce Cooperative Society (AFPCS) in Nyandarua County in Kenya are involved in the production of snow peas, sugar snap and garden peas for export.

AFPCS which has been in existence since 2005 was linked with the Danish embassy in July 2017 as part of a pilot project on clean agriculture that would see the Cooperative increase yields while ensuring adherence to food and health standards. The embassy would then connect them to markets in Denmark.

During the 1-week training, the SSP's were taken through the prescribed SSP curriculum which was administered by trainers from PCPB and CropLife Kenya. The training fits in well with the vision of the group who intend to become exporters in the near future, as soon as they meet all the necessary requirements. With the help of various stakeholders, they have fulfilled inspection requirements as set out by the National Plant Protection Organization and have obtained the necessary licenses from the Horticultural Crops Directorate of the Kenyan Government. They are also equipped with mobile printers that enable them to label their produce for traceability purposes. The last remaining hurdles were the certification of their pesticide applicators and certification by GLOBALG.A.P. The SSP training was therefore very timely in enabling AFPCS to achieve their vision.

The group produces 4 tons of fresh produce each week with an estimated market value of USD12,000. It seems that with the inputs of CropLife Kenya, they are well on their way to becoming responsible users of pesticides that shall be a shining beacon for other farmers in the region and countrywide.

Benson Ngigi



A representative from the Danish Embassy addressing the SSPs at the end of their training



Stewardship and Spray Service



A session on pictograms and the pesticide label



Practical session on calibration and spraying skills



Stewardship and Spray Service

CropLife Egypt participates in BASF clinic program

BASF requested CropLife Egypt to participate in their clinics, where the company holds a one-day clinic in a selected village for smallholder farmers and where these farmers can take samples of their pests and diseases to BASF experts for identification and advice.

CropLife Egypt conducted an awareness program including Responsible Use and Anti-counterfeiting through such a BASF clinic on 21 February at the Abo-Shalaby village in Sharkeya governorate.

Said Abdella, CropLife Master Trainer delivered the Responsible Use awareness program and promoted both the SSP and Container Management concepts.

Said Abdella



Top - Above Left & Right : Said Abdella delivering RU awareness training



Group photo with BASF team

Stewardship and Spray Service



Planning Meeting for the Container Management Stakeholder Workshop in February- Potential start-up of a Container Management Pilot Program in Malawi

The meeting took place at the offices of the Pesticides Control Board, Bvumbwe, whilst the planning team comprised of:

- Precious Chizonda – National Project Coordinator, FAO
- Misheck Soko – Registrar of Pesticides
- Lesten Banda – Principal Pesticides Inspector, PCB
- Thyphord Chirwa – Bayer Business Manager – Malawi
- Ronald Chilumpha – Chairman, CropLife Malawi
- Danniell Kalowekamo – Projects, Field Coordinator, CropLife Malawi
- Les Hillowitz – CropLife Africa Middle East

It was agreed that the Stakeholders Workshop would take place in Lilongwe on 22 February. Supportive roles from FAO and an identified recycler will be sought. It is hoped that a representative from Philip Morris will be the guest speaker. Preparation visits were made to two recyclers as well as to a major coffee estate.

(This workshop has taken place and will be covered in the March Newsletter)

Les Hillowitz



Stewardship and Spray Service

CropLife Egypt SSP training through the Shiraka project

CropLife Egypt, in partnership with Blue Moon are engaged with a Dutch funded project under the name of "Local Assistance and Business services for Sustainable Agribusiness" (LABS-Agribusiness) or (SHIRAKA) in Egypt. This is being conducted with other partners, North and South Consultants Exchange "NSCE" and CAVO.

The overall goal of LABS Agribusiness is to increase the knowledge and skills of appropriate civil servants and entrepreneurs for the development of sustainable agribusiness value chains. With this knowledge and the technical assistance of entrepreneurs in the micro and small business sector, they should be able to enter sustainable agribusiness value chains. Additionally, they will have to be registered and can then formally contribute to the development of sustainable local economies.

CropLife Egypt conducted an SSP training in addition to a one-day Business Skills training for farmers in Esna, Luxor (Upper Egypt) to qualify them in becoming Spray Service Providers with the necessary skills to start-up small businesses.

The training took place at the offices of Blue Moon, in Esna, Luxor, Egypt and was attended by 10 trainees from Small Producers Organizations from 11 - 15 February 2018.

Said Abdella



Said Abdella explaining scouting



Netherlands Enterprise Agency



Stewardship and Spray Service



Group Photo of Participants



Field Practical training

Training in spray application



Stewardship and Spray Service

New Partnerships in SSP Projects

Several CropLife national associations started 2018 with new partnerships in Spray Service Provider (SSP) projects, including Kenya and Nigeria. In other countries, such as Egypt and Malawi, previously started projects continued with rollout. Since January 224 SSPs have been trained, bringing the total trained SSPs in Africa to 10,750.

Nigeria

CropLife Nigeria started two new partnerships with the Market Development Program (MADE) and the AFOS Foundation. MADE, implemented by DAI, operates in several value chains in the Niger Delta region. With the setting up of a network of 120 SSPs in 5 states, they want to promote entrepreneurship among rural youth and improve the access to good quality pesticides.

The other new partner is the AFOS Foundation from Germany. As part of their livelihood enhancement training for smallholder farmers, 30 SSPs will be trained.

CropLife Nigeria also continued with existing partnerships. A second SSP project was agreed and signed with Palladium/Propcom. Last year, 165 SSPs were trained who serviced more than 7,000 farmers. Owing to these positive results, Propcom and CropLife discussed on how to scale-up the SSP activities and finally agreed on a network of 1,000 SSPs in 5 states.

Added to this, an extra effort will be made to include women in activities by allowing women's groups to nominate their own candidates to become SSPs. So far, 150 SSPs were trained.

Another new agreement was signed with the Competitive African Rice Initiative (CARI) program funded by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). Activities with CARI started in 2016 when 30 SSPs were trained and continued in 2017 with a new group of 135 SSPs, reaching more than 4,000 rice farmers.

For this year, an additional 60 SSPs will be added to the network. All training programs took place in January, while monitoring is planned for April and May.

Ghana

CropLife Ghana agreed with GIZ/CARI to continue activities in 2018. It was agreed to train an additional 45 SSPs to the existing 28. Training activities are planned for May.



AFOS

DAI
Shaping a more livable world.



SSP Field Coordinator, Muhsin Gambo Lawal (right) with some of the SSPs he trained in Kano state in Nigeria



A concerted effort is being made in Nigeria with the Propcom project to include females in the selection of SSPs and in graduation ceremonies.

PrOpCom

Making Nigerian Agricultural Markets Work for the Poor



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Stewardship and Spray Service

Kenya

Kenya started two new partnerships this year with 2SCALE, implemented by the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) and a project, funded by the Danish Embassy. Both projects are in potatoes; for IFDC, 30 SSPs will be trained of which the potato project already has 24 trained.

CropLife Kenya is the sixth country to enter into a partnership with IFDC/2SCALE, this, after Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Uganda.

Activities with the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) will continue in line with the existing agreement. Last year, the total number of SSPs trained reached 420.

During the next few months, monitoring will take place to see how the SSPs are doing in terms of extra income earned and the number of farmers serviced.

Ethiopia

CropLife Ethiopia will enter its third year of partnership with the Horti-Life project implemented by SNV. So far, 138 SSPs have been trained.

For the current year, an additional 75 SSPs are planned to be trained and monitoring will be undertaken amongst those trained last year.

Egypt

CropLife Egypt implemented several activities last year under the Shiraka program, which is funded by the Netherlands Embassy, in partnership with Blue Moon.

The overall goal of Shiraka is to increase the knowledge and skills of civil servants and entrepreneurs for the development of sustainable agribusiness value chains.

This year, 10 additional SSPs were trained, bringing the total to 23 SSPs. More SSPs are very likely to be trained this year.

Malawi

CropLife Malawi will continue its collaboration with the Malawi Oilseeds Sector Transformation (MOST) project. In the previous 2 years, 455 SSPs were trained who serviced almost 5,000 cotton farmers this past season. To date this year 50 new SSPs have been trained. Monitoring of existing SSPs is planned for later this year.

Manon Mireille Dohmen



Trainer, Said Abdella (middle) taking SSPs through the session of scouting for the Shiraka project in Egypt.



Strict selection of candidates to be trained as SSPs for the MADE project in Nigeria. From experience, we know: the better the selection, the better the SSP will perform.



Field session in Kenya to train SSPs in the potato sector

Stewardship and Spray Service

Responsible Use Awareness Program Starts 2017 for Smallholder Farmers, Esna - Luxor

CropLife Egypt works in close collaboration with Blue Moon in activities involving professional spray teams with the intention of servicing participants of the **USAID funded premium project for Egyptian small growers** which also includes small producer organizations.

Blue Moon staff continued the one-day awareness program to promote the responsible use of pesticides and the usage of personal protection equipment under supervision of CLE trainer Said Abdella. Also, included in the program was the importance of first-aid and how to manage empty pesticide containers. The awareness program was developed to include pictograms for illiterate farmers.

The 1st round of the 2018 program took place from 17 to 20 December at 2 "small producer organization's (El-shaghab and El-der) in Luxor, Egypt. 84 farmers attended the program including 14 females from the General Assembly members.

Said Abdella



Said Abdella delivering a program

Below: Farmers attending the awareness program



Group Photo



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Regulatory Advocacy

Message from the Outgoing Chairman of the RRC:

The Regional Regulatory Committee (RRC) was formed in 2009 based on an initiative by Rudolf Guyer and the CropLife AME ExCo. The industry association felt the need for a dedicated committee of regulatory experts, who could provide regulatory oversight on local and regional registration guidelines, support in regulatory issue management and last but not least, provide training and capacity building at the annual sub-regional hub meetings. I was a member of the RRC since its inception in 2009 and took over the chairmanship role in May 2012. Over the last 5 years I always appreciated the very good discussions in the RRC meetings, the dedication of the team and our successes in addressing regulatory challenges in Africa, Middle East. In the annual hub meetings, the RRC supported regulatory capacity building in Africa (in collaboration with CLI) on topics such as GHS, risk assessment, equivalence, minor formulation changes and in emerging policy issues, like HHPs, EDs and pollinators. Those activities were very well recognized by regulators in Africa, Middle East and this resulted in CropLife being regarded as a trusted and appreciated partner for discussions on regulatory developments.

In 2014, the RRC was strengthened by Stella Simiyu Wafukho joining the team to support in advocacy and regulatory affairs management. Stella clearly made my life as chair easier; and I would like to thank her for her valued contribution and support in areas such as meeting minutes, action follow-ups, organizing of meetings and providing steerage and focus to the team. I would like to inform you that I am leaving the RRC, since I have changed my role in Syngenta and will no longer have regulatory responsibility for the Africa, Middle East region. I would like to take this opportunity to wish my successor, Johannes Hutzler from BASF, as well as the entire RRC team every success in the future. The RRC has defined its priorities for 2018 / 2019 and I am sure will never be short on topics as the regulatory environment in Africa is rapidly changing and becoming more influenced by international regulatory developments. Thanks again to the RRC and to Stella for the last 5 years.

Michael Studer

Message from the incoming Chairman of the RRC

The regulatory landscape in the Africa, Middle East region is dynamic and subject to constant change. The authorities are endeavoring to adapt the framework conditions to the challenges of our time and to take up the latest developments. The RRC's main mission is to assist the regulators in their efforts to help create a modern and reliable regulatory environment. The successes are visible in many places, but there is still much to do in the future. In addition to all other contributors, Michael Studer, as chair of the RRC, was instrumental in these efforts over the last years. For his tireless dedication and personal commitment, I would like to thank him at this point and wish him all the best for his new role. After almost three years in the RRC, I will now take over the chairmanship from Michael. I intend to continue the tasks in his spirit and look forward to further cooperation with the RRC colleagues. Together, we will continue to work in the future to help shape the regulatory frameworks in the Africa, Middle East region and provide local authorities and decision-makers with advice and assistance. We will continue to position CropLife Africa Middle East as a trusted partner in regulatory matters, further support harmonization initiatives in the region and effective management of emerging regulatory matters.

Johannes Hutzler



Stella and Samira bidding Farewell to Michael Studer



Plant Biotechnology

African Women Vow to Rally Behind Biotech

Members of the Africa Women for Biosciences (AWfB) have vowed to rally behind biotechnology as they advocate for efficient and effective policy environment. The network, comprising of women with an interest and passion in science, technology and innovation, said this during a biosafety communication training workshop held on January 25-26, 2018, in Nairobi, Kenya.

The workshop aimed at equipping AWfB's members with effective communication and media engagement skills, in order to diversify voices advocating for biotechnology in Kenya.

The Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation's (KALRO) Deputy Director General, Dr. Felister Makini acknowledged that the greatest challenge faced by scientists is communication. She added that it is crucial for the public to understand scientists and the work they do in order to remain invaluable in society.

Dr. Makini emphasized the need for more communication trainings that will enable women scientists to engage the people around them on biotech crops, adding that their place in society can help address fears surrounding the technology. "We need the public to give science a chance to thrive, an environment where we can operate," she remarked. "Women's voices will play a fundamental role towards unlocking some of the barriers blocking important technologies such as modern biotechnology."

ISAAA *AfriCenter's* Director Dr. Margaret Karembu encouraged participants to contribute to the government's 'Big-Four' action plan towards economic development, adding that members of AWfB were in a unique place to do this. Dr. Karembu added that biotechnology can make a significant contribution towards the government's effort in meeting its strategic plan in food security, manufacturing and housing, and urged the women to acquire necessary skills that will ensure their voices are heard.

The workshop, organized by ISAAA *AfriCenter* and the Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology (OFAB)-Kenya chapter, was attended by over fifty (50) women involved in research, academia and policy.

Participants were taken through the principles of effective biosafety communication, how to develop messages that will resonate with their audiences, as well as how to engage with the media and use social media for policy advocacy.

ISAAA



Plant Biotechnology

Rwandan Researchers Discuss GM Crop Adoption

Biotechnology has been recognized as one of the tools to boost food security by several countries, however, some remain to be skeptical about adopting it.

Rwanda is one of the latest countries that made actions towards legalizing GM crops. According to an official at the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), they have drafted a law regulating GM crops. Furthermore, Gérardine Mukeshimana, Minister for Agriculture and Animal Resources, expressed his support to adopt GM technology, saying it would help feed the growing population. "You can't forever stick to crops and methods of farming that our forefathers practiced in 1900," she said. Mukeshimana is a plant researcher and holds both a master's degree and PhD in plant breeding, genetics, and biotechnology from Michigan State University in the United States.



Gérardine Mukeshimana, Minister for Agriculture and Animal Resources,



ISAAA



Dr. Rose Gidado, assistant director of the National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA).

Nigeria is Gearing towards Commercializing GM Seeds

In Nigeria, local seed companies have a strategic role to play in the multiplication and distribution of seeds to farmers when GM seeds become available in the market. This was according to Dr. Rose Gidado, assistant director of the National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA).

The biosafety law of Nigeria was put in place in 2015, followed by the establishment of the National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA), which has been in charge of implementing biosafety regulations. According to NBMA, the country is ripe for commercialization of GM products. This may imply that Nigeria will soon start the commercialization of staple crops that have been tested through confined field trials such as the Maruca-resistant cowpea currently being tested by farmers on the fields, and Bt cotton, which is on general release.

"When GM seeds are finally commercialized, our indigenous seed companies have a very key role to play in the commercialization and multiplication of seeds. Of course, they have to take over, it is not the foreign seed companies that will determine, even if the foreign seed companies are going to be part of it, they are going to work hand in hand with our local seed companies, build their capacities and all that," said Dr. Gidado, who is also the country coordinator of the Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology (OFAB) Nigeria chapter. She added that local seed companies were already being engaged and sensitized about their part in multiplication and distribution of the seeds.

ISAAA





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