CropLife Africa Middle East

CropLife Africa Middle East Newsletter

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Training Report from CropLife Mauritius

The pesticides distribution network in Mauritius is made up of 75 sales outlets throughout the island. They are all registered with the local Dangerous Chemical Control Board. Most of these outlets are run by people who have never received any training on pesticides handling. Many of them have been running their business for several years and have acquired some basic knowledge along the way.

As the members of CropLife Mauritius use these outlets for distribution of their product range, the association undertook to train the distributors on the safe handling of pesticides in 2006, using trainers trained by CropLife Africa Middle East. Twenty have already been trained and the training program will carry on for the remaining distributors in the first quarter of 2007 .

The response has been great and the trainees were very satisfied with the course content. All of them expressed the desire to join CropLife and to have the opportunity to have more training in the future.

News about CropLife Mauritius' success has gone round and we have been asked by P.R.P.V. of the Indian Ocean Commission to train pesticides distributors in the Seychelles. CropLife Madagascar has expressed the desire to liaise with us for future training projects.

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What's happening?

- Training in Mauritius, Malawi, Italy
- GM crop production statistics
- FAO trains obstocks specialists in Tunisia
- Regulatory issues in Jordan and Egypt
- Uganda national association
- South Africa ASP

FAO trains Obstocks Technical Specialists

The Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Obstocks team of Mark Davis and Kevin Helps conducted a two week training exercise in Tunisia for 19 Obstocks Technical Specialists from around the world. This now increases the trained pool of resource personnel for the FAO to call upon to assist with Obstocks and ASP issues around the globe.

CropLife Africa Middle East made a small contribution to this training by providing limited funding for Peter Mills, who provided a five day Train-the-Trainer course for the participants prior to their Inventory and Safeguarding training.

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Regulatory Actions in Jordan

North Africa Middle East Regulatory Issues

Based on the recommendation of the national Pesticides Registration Committee on ban of Dicofol, the Minister of Agriculture of Jordan decreed the following:

- Importation of pesticide formulations containing the active ingredient "Dicofol" was allowed until 31-December-2006, provided that LC's relative to such consignments had been opened prior to the 15-November-2006.
- Locally formulated pesticides containing the a.i. Dicofol produced after the 15-November-2006 are not allowed for supply in the Jordanian Market.
- Local formulation plants are allowed to manufacture pesticides containing "Dicofol" for exportation purposes only.

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Regulatory Progress in Egypt

The Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation of the Arab Republic of Egypt has issued Ministerial Decree No.90 of the year 2007, providing for regulations of registration, re-registration renewal and use of agricultural pesticides.

The decree stipulates that measures recommended by the WHO/FAO shall be followed to toxicity risk assessment, and reassessment and safe handling during the registration and re-registration renewal of pesticides. The decree also stipulated that the specifications put in place by the JMPR for pesticides shall be followed, keeping in consideration the recommendation of the IARC.

The decree elaborates that when determining the pesticides to be allowed for registration, handling and use, the recommendations of the USEPA and the EC are to be taken into consideration. This is in order to protect public health and the environment and to maintain crop productivity and safety.

The Ministerial decree confirms that all relevant international treaties and conventions such as PIC and POPs, already endorsed, or yet to be signed or endorsed by Egypt are to also to be taken into account.

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ToT for Agronomy Institute, Bari, Italy

Peter Mills of CropLife Africa Middle East conducted the second Train-the-Trainer course at the Mediterranean Agronomy Institute in Bari, Italy, in January, 2007. The institute provides post-graduate courses in Crop Protection. Students are drawn from the Mediterranean region, and this course included participants from Tunisia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt, Palestine, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Turkey.

Students are first run through a three day facilitation training course. Then, during the last two days they present their own lessons on topics in IPM and Responsible Use of Pesticides. They are assessed in several ways, including writing a test and having their lessons assessed. Each lesson is assessed by facilitator and participants (right), using discussion sessions and an evaluation form.

This particular group was highly motivated and presented some excellent lessons. Manel El Air of Tunisia (below, left) summarises the IPM components for Citrus Leaf Miner using a well illustrated poster.

This course is used as a credit towards attaining their Masters degree. Exhausted, but happy participants received their certificates (below, right), pictured with Peter Mills of CropLife Africa Middle East and academic, support and translation staff of the Institute. Contact: peter.mills@mweb.co.za

This is the second Train-the-Trainer course for post-graduate students aimed at equipping them with the necessary facilitation and technical knowledge & skills before they enter the work environment

GM Crop Production up 180% in South Africa

On Tuesday, 23-January-2007, Mr. Lourie Bosman, delivered a presentation at the GMO Press Conference in Pretoria. Mr Bosman (pictured below) is President of Agri SA, and also serves on the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), and chairs the IFAP's Meats and Feeds Committee. The following is a summary report of his press release.

The production of GM crops in South Africa – maize, soya and cotton – in 2006 totalled an impressive 1.4 million ha. This is a significant increase of 180% over the previous year's 500000 ha. White and yellow maize topped the list with more than one million hectares followed by soya and cotton.

This is the second highest percentage increase of any country in the world surpassed only by India with 192% increase.

South Africa is also a major producer of GM maize seed produced by numerous commercial and emergent farmers. In 2006 some 1232 metric tons worth R37 million were exported, earning South Africa valuable foreign exchange.

South Africa is also a regular exporter of GM and non-GM cotton seed.

These achievements, in no uncertain terms, reflect the trust and confidence of thousands of South African commercial and emergent farmers and consumers in crop biotechnology as the leaders in Africa of this unique agricultural technology, says Mr. Lourie Bosman, president Agri SA.

Speaking at the press conference in Pretoria, he said according to the latest figures released by Clive James, chairman of ISAAA (International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications), the global adoption of biotech crops in 2006 was the fastest crop technology advance in recent history.

In 2006, 10.3 million farmers (8.5m in 2005) in 22 countries (21 in 2005) planted 102 million hectares (90m in 2005) of GM crops. This is an increase of 12 million ha or 13% over the previous year. This is the tenth consecutive year that biotech crops continued to climb at a sustained double-digit growth rate.

"This is an historical landmark in that it is the first time that more than 100 million hectares of biotech crops were grown in any one year," said Bosman.

Of the 10.3 million farmers 9.3 million (7.7 m in 2005) were small, resource poor farmers from developing countries whose increased income from biotech crops contributed to their poverty alleviation.

Most of them were Bt cotton farmers – China 6.8 million, India 2.3 million, Philippines

100 000, and in South Africa several thousand. Of the 22 countries 11 are developing countries. The biggest growth was in India who for the first time grew 3.8 million ha Bt cotton, up from 1.3 million ha the previous year, exceeding China's 3.5 million ha.

In South Africa more than 2000 emergent farmers planted biotech crops.

Biotech crops in developing countries have increased consistently every year during the past ten years with an increase of seven million ha in 2006 over the previous year, totalling 40.9 million ha, compared to an increase of five million ha for industrial countries during the same period.

Maize, soya and cotton remain the three principal GM crops. In the USA biotech canola, squash, and papaya are also grown. In some countries GM rice is also produced.

For the first time a new GM herbicide-tolerant lucerne was commercialised in the USA. This can be good news for the thousands of lucerne growers in South Africa.

Biotech soya continued to be the principal biotech crop, grown on 58.6 million ha, followed by maize 25.2 million ha, cotton 13.4 million ha and canola 4.8 mil-

lion ha. Herbicide-tolerance has consistently been the dominant trait followed by insect resistance and stacked genes.

The main growers of GM crops continued to be the USA with 54.6 million ha, followed by Argentina 18 million ha, Brazil 11.5 million ha, Canada 6.1 million ha, India 3.8 million ha and China 3.5 million ha. South Africa ranks as the eighth largest grower of biotech crops.

54.6m ha GM crops in USA

Growth of biotech crops in the European Union looks promising. Slovakia planted Bt maize for the first time, bringing the total number of countries planting biotech crops in the EU to six.

Spain still leads the way with 60 000 ha Bt maize. Importantly, the collective Bt maize hectarage in the other five EU countries, France, Czech Republic, Portugal, Germany and Slovakia increased over five-fold in 2006, from approximately 1500 ha to 8500 ha. The biggest increase was in France, from 500 ha in 2005 to 5000 ha in 2006.

Biotech crop cultivation is now in its 11th year (eight in South Africa), despite fear-mongering campaigns by activists that GM crops supposedly pose a health and environmental threat. Not a shred of medical or scientific evidence has been produced anywhere in the world to support these claims. To the contrary, all the world's leading academies of science and medicine and agricultural research institutions have given GM food a clean bill of health.

The future outlook for GM crops is more promising than ever. Based on the percentage growth in the past ten years, it is anticipated that by 2015 at least 20 million farmers in 40 countries will be growing biotech crops on 200 million ha. Drought-tolerant crops are expected to be commercialised by 2010.

By far the most important potential contribution of biotech crops will be their contribution to the humanitarian Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of reducing poverty and hunger by 50% by 2015.

"The policy position of Agri SA regarding biotechnology was formulated by the group of commodity organisations represented in the organisation's Commodity Chamber and can be summarised as follows: *The organisation is in favour of biotechnology development by means of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) for the purpose of attaining sustainable agricultural production and, simultaneously, promote profitability and competitiveness, provided that the application thereof does not detrimentally affect the health of humankind or animals, as well as the environment*," Bosman emphasised.

The Chamber has agreed that specific policy viewpoints of individual commodity organisations regarding the possible application of biotechnology as a result of the distinctiveness of the commodity branches within the three commodity branches of crop production, horticulture and animal husbandry, be left to these organisations.

South Africa has an official national biotechnology strategy, compiled in 2001, and agricultural biotechnology forms an intrinsic part thereof. It is also government policy that South Africa should develop its own biotechnological innovations. Agri SA is satisfied that this strategy complies with the requirements of the organisation.

It is also the case with the comprehensive legislation (the GMO Act of 1997, regulations and procedures) that regulates genetic modification from research to where it is made available in food form. Guidelines for biosafety and biosafety requirements have ensured, since 1990, that safety would be evaluated in depth before approval will be given for release of a GM crop.

Several new GM crops are in the pipeline. The first is maize cultivars resistant to stalk borers and also herbicide-tolerant. Locally developed maize, groundnuts and soya that will be drought-tolerant are at present being tested in field experiments, as well as potatoes with resistance against viruses and also against the potato tuber moth. Maize with resistance against maize streak virus has been developed locally. There have also been breakthroughs regarding wine grapes and sugar cane.

Research and technology development represent the corner-stone of sustainable agricultural development to promote the profitability and competitiveness of the sector. Agri SA has applied itself in the immediate past to promote improved agricultural research and technology development by means of the applicable work structure – the National Agricultural Research Forum (NARF), of which Agri SA is a member – and is actively involved in the development of the proposed Research and Development Strategy of the Department of Agriculture.

Izak van der Merwe, chairman of the Research and Technology Committee of Agri SA, also attended the triennial conference of the *Global Forum on Agricultural Research* in New Delhi, India, in November last year. The conference theme was the reorientation of agricultural research to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

Dr John Purchase, general manager of Grain SA, also attended the Africa Union's workshop on the *Action Plan of the African Seed and Biotechnology Program* in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 13 and 14 November 2006, on behalf of Agri SA.

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Responsible Use and IPM Cascade Training in Malawi

Francis GM Banda, trained in plant protection, is employed by the Agronomy Department of the Limbe Leaf Tobacco Co. Ltd. In Malawi. He is a GAP and SRP Programmes Manager, responsible for formulating strategies and implementing Good Agriculture Practice and Social Responsibility Programmes in all LLTC Agronomy Projects in Malawi.

Tobacco is one of the crops that uses substantial amounts of various Crop Protection Agents (CPA's) in Malawi and therefore, there is potential risk of CPA contamination hence the need to protect the people, the consumer, animals and the environment through training and awareness campaigns.

The GAP team at LLTC consisting of Tamanda Chidzanja, Charles Maulidi and Francis Banda initially jointly conducted the first Responsible Use training in Malawi with Steve Manonge, a CropLife Accredited Trainer from Bayer CropScience, Zimbabwe in 2004. In May, 2006 Charles and Francis participated in the Training of Trainers' training course in Lilongwe, Malawi conducted by Peter Mills and organised by CropLife Africa Middle East.

Since 2004, the GAP Team has conducted a series of training sessions on Product Knowledge, Responsible Use of Agrochemicals and CPA container disposal. More recently Francis has conducted courses in IPM that are currently under implementation on the project estates and farms. IPM covers issues of key pests, scouting and monitoring, threshold levels and safety during CPA application. The courses targeted Operation Managers, Farm Managers, Clerks, Applicators, Chemical Storekeepers and Farmers.

Training courses are tailor-made to suit particular audiences, including appropriate choice of language and venue, to allow easy and better understanding, participation and application of the subject matter. Knowledge, skills, abilities and materials acquired during the CropLife Africa Middle East ToT training course have been quite useful and are used frequently during the training sessions. Practical sessions are an important part of the training for consolidation purposes. So far over **2500 employees and farmers** have been trained and a huge percentage is implementing the various aspects covered during the training. CPA awareness campaigns targeting the general public, resident in and around the project areas have also been conducted occasionally.

To ensure that messages reach grassroots level and to ensure that implementation takes place, the Gap Team has an organised program for quarterly reinforcement visits that involve going to the individual farms and estates during the times when Crop Protection Agents are applied (mostly during tobacco nursery period) and at planting. The GAP team also visits CPA container collection and disposal sites, so as to audit, inspect, remedy and advise the way forward. The aim is to ensure that appropriate protective clothing is used by all those who handle agrochemicals and that label instructions are adhered to during and after application. And that proper disposal procedures are adhered to. The results of such efforts have been remarkable and a high level of compliance has been achieved.

Further development of GAP and SRP programmes will involve training extension agents who work for other industry stakeholders and are involved in training farmers that operating outside LLTC projects areas. The demand is high and challenging, considering the multitude of small scale tobacco growers available all over the country.

In conclusion, it can not go without mentioning that responsible use of CPA is important to ensure product continual use, safety of the consumer, the user, the public and the protection of environment. Francis and the GAP Team appreciates the ToT training course in which they participated and looks forward to address the huge demand for training, particularly the small scale farmers who deserve more attention.

Time to chant "safety slogans"

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News Snippets

Uganda

CropLife Uganda has made great strides in introducing a levy system to finance the association, and the partnership that they have developed with MAAIF falls into the footsteps of Kenya. The National Association now has its own Secretariat, Betty Atto.

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South Africa ASP

Regular meetings took place during the month with South African ASP Project Management Team, and it is likely that the clean-up will start with the Limpopo Province in March, 2007.

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RECENT AND FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

- CropLife Africa Middle East Executive Committee Meeting, Cannes, France: 06-February-2007.
- CropLife Ghana training of agricultural input dealers, including evaluation of Master Trainers, Accra, Ghana: 26-February-2007 to 02-March-2007.
- CropLife Nigeria training of agricultural input dealers, including evaluation of Master Trainers, Lagos, Nigeria: 12– to 16-March-2007.
- Biotechnology Training Course, Centurion, South Africa: 19-March-2007 to 31-March-2007.
- CropLife Africa Middle East, West Central Hub & Regulatory Workshops, Lomé, Togo: 20 to 22-March-2007.
- Mali training of agricultural input dealers, including evaluation of Master Trainers, Bamako and Ségou, Mali: 16 to 20-April-2007.
- FANRPAN Strategic and Business Plan Workshop, Pretoria, South Africa: 02-May-2007 to 05-May-2007.
- CropLife Africa Middle East, East Southern Hub & Regulatory Workshops, Entebbe, Uganda: 26 to 27-June-2007.
- CropLife Africa Middle East, North Africa Middle East Hub & Regulatory Workshops, Amman, Jordan: 06 to 07-November-2007.

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