



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Farmers, seed and crop protection associations issue warning call:***

**“New European regulation on crop protection products could have a severe impact on European agriculture”**

**Brussels, 23 April 2008** – COPA-COGECA, ECPA and ESA have called on legislators not to strip farmers of their last lines of defence against the pests and diseases threatening Europe’s crops. They warn that legislation being discussed in Brussels could potentially damage European agricultural production, at a time when we rely more heavily than ever on the continent’s farmers to provide a secure supply of quality food.

More than 100 experts participated in an industry workshop in Brussels, as farmers, crop protection and seed associations came together for the first time to analyse the impact of new proposed legislation on plant protection products. This new regulation could include “Cut-Off” criteria, which would ban the use of many active substances based on hazard measurements of the ingredients instead of risk assessment. This could lead to up to 80% of currently available substances being withdrawn from the market.

Luc Peeters of COPA-COGECA, warned against this “Cut-Off approach”: “Maintaining a risk based approach is essential to ensure that safe products remain on the market”, said Peeters. “Loosing up to 80% of crop protection products would make EU agriculture unsustainable, leading to an increased dependency on food imports”.

“We believe that the new proposal provides an opportunity for further harmonisation. The zonal concept has certain advantages and for minor uses in particular we believe that further harmonisation will be essential”.

Henri Pluvinage, President of the French National Federation of Fruit Producers is worried about the impact on farmers. “If we cannot use pesticides we might as well stop production. We need plant protection products to ensure that we have enough good quality fruit in Europe. We need to think about the economic consequences for European producers”, warned Pluvinage.

COPA-COGECA’s concerns were echoed by both the European Crop Protection Association and the European Seed Association.

“A range of safe crop protection products will be key in the future to allow the production of adequate high quality food” said Euros Jones, Regulatory Affairs Director of ECPA. “There is a need to look carefully at the impact of the cut-off criteria and make sure that the final legislation allows safe and essential products to be kept on the market”.

“In order to fully resolve current intra-community barriers to trade and use of treated seeds, an EU-wide authorisation for seed treatment is needed”, said Garlich von Essen, Secretary General of ESA. “Such a concept would encourage the further development of these specific, often quite small-scale applications”.

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**Note to editors:**

The workshop “Plant health in the EU” was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April in Brussels with over 100 participants representing farmers, the seed and crop protection products industry, decision makers and other stakeholders.

The final conclusions of the workshop are available from:

- Roxane FELLER, Senior Policy Advisor ([Roxane.Feller@copa-cogeca.eu](mailto:Roxane.Feller@copa-cogeca.eu)) +32.2.287.27.45  
Simon MICHEL BERGER ([Simon.Michel-Berger@copa-cogeca.eu](mailto:Simon.Michel-Berger@copa-cogeca.eu)) +32.2.287.27.90
- Kari MATALONE ([kari.matalone@ecpa.eu](mailto:kari.matalone@ecpa.eu)) +322.663.15.52
- Garlich VON ESSEN, Secretary General ([vonessen@euroseeds.org](mailto:vonessen@euroseeds.org)) +322.743.28.60  
Isabelle KLOPSTEIN, Legal Advisor ([isabelleklopstein@euroseeds.org](mailto:isabelleklopstein@euroseeds.org)) +322.743.28.68

**About COPA-COGECA**

COPA and COGECA are the organisations representing European farmers and agricultural cooperatives. They have 76 member organisations from the EU member states, and speak on behalf of over 15 million people working in European agriculture as well as over 40,000 cooperatives. For more information: [www.copa-cogeca.eu](http://www.copa-cogeca.eu)

**About ESA**

ESA European Seed Association is the voice of the European seed industry, representing the interests of those active in research, breeding, production and marketing of seeds of agricultural, horticultural and ornamental plant species. For more information: [www.euroseeds.org](http://www.euroseeds.org)

**About ECPA**

The European Crop Protection Association (ECPA) represents the crop protection industry interests at European level. Its members include all major companies and national associations across Europe. For more information: [www.ecpa.eu](http://www.ecpa.eu)