

MINUTES OF THE COPA-COGECA WORKING PARTY ON HONEY ON 25/02/13

PRESENT: Bruneau, Stich, Panella, Izquiero, Huszcza, Kaveluyk, Was, Montaigu, Kicinski, Matousek, Gkouliaditi, Valentini, Fernandez Augustin, Krauze, Gonzalo, Moreira, Gal, Chlebo, Hrabav, Jentzer, Hennion, Schiro, Hederer, Egyed, Laszloffy, Kall, Dahl, Lie, Maske, Ginman, Parikka, Piscopp, Demiloli.

SECRETARIAT: Petit, Di Rubbo, Gyorffy

GUESTS: Rachel Sharp (EFSA), Jack F. Kay (Commission Codex on drug residues in food)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

Item 1 and 2: Adoption of the agenda and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting

→ The group adopted the agenda [MI\(13\)330 \(rev.1\)](#) and approved the minutes of the previous meeting [MI\(12\)9572 \(rev.1\)](#). The Chairman introduced an AOB information point on the European Congress on Beekeeping.

Item 3: Election of the Presidency of the Working Party on Honey

→ The group elected Etienne Bruneau (FWA) as Chairman of Copa-Cogeca Working Party of Honey. Francesco Panella (Legacoop) and Josef Stich (LKÖ) were elected Vice-chairmen of Copa-Cogeca Working Party on Honey.

Item 4.1: Situation and management of the honey market

→ The Chairman presented this point [MI\(13\)1413 \(rev.2\)](#). A majority of members expressed concerns on the situation as far as price, quantity and quality is concerned. The Spanish representative referred to the increase in Chinese honey imports by 40%. The Italian representative requested to have a comparison of Chinese price and the average price of all exporting countries to the EU. The Polish representative underlined the fact that EU production should be protected from cheap imports and referred to mixed honey. It is important to monitor the flow between European countries since sometimes imported honey from China is mixed with European and sold as European (for example, Ukraine is the main port of import of Chinese honey and Ukrainian honey mixed with Chinese is exported to EU). The French representative expressed concerns about the quality of Chinese honey and raised the awareness about the fact that Germany, the biggest EU honey importer, has the lowest imports from China. The need to improve controls was also underlined.

The Chairman also introduced the questionnaire which the Commission has requested to fill in [MI\(13\)1281 \(rev.1\)](#). He asked the members to send the data to the Secretariat and to make proposals for improving the questionnaire in order to make it more efficient. The group expressed worries about the quality of the questionnaire and agreed to contribute.

Item 4.4 The EFSA opinion on the effects of neonicotinoids on bees

→ Rachel Sharp from EFSA Pesticides Unit made a presentation on EFSA's conclusions on neonicotinoids [MI\(13\)1936 \(rev.1\)](#).

A majority of members welcomed EFSA's work. The Polish representative underlined that the risk increases when bees are affected by other mortality reasons such as diseases. The Italian representative suggested that data existing outside Europe is also analyzed (on residues present in soil). He underlined the need for objectiveness and that all available studies are published. The Austrian representative mentioned that residues of Thiamethoxam have been discovered in the soil in Austria. The French representative referred to the issue of dust (intoxications have taken place through breathing). France demands not to ban the neonicotinoids but to link science with what is happening on the field, not restrict farming but take account of the reality. The German representative referred to some German studies which show the consequences of using neonicotinoids. The Spanish representative considers that all data is available. It is important to help EFSA conclude the risk evaluation and encourage the Commission to make a proposal in line with EFSA's opinion.

Several questions have been asked: next steps from Commission side, if synergy effects have been

analyzed.

EFSA representative underlined that the persistence of the substances in soil has been looked at. Some studies could not identify a risk for honeybees. It is important to have the information if this exists. The issue of dust is complex, with bees flying through dust clouds during sowing. Certain level of mortality has been noticed with Thiamethoxam. EFSA has never looked into the issue of Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam. Risk and exposure are taken into account in the assessment but there are some data gaps in the case of certain substances. EFSA is aware about synergy effects, these have not been analyzed, however it is expected that the level of scientific assessment and methodology is improved. All the assessment needs to be independent, including the panel opinion.

The Secretariat reminded the fact that several working groups are involved: phytosanitary, honey, cereals, oilseeds. In certain regions, without seed treatment in the case of rape, the losses can reach up to 30%, in certain cases substitution is not possible. It should also be considered the fact that production can be relocated as a result and the animal production sector affected in terms of feed costs. It is important to see what are the mitigation measures available. The document has been sent to the groups concerned, all organisations have a say and the Praesidium is asking us to work on risk mitigation measures.

The Chairman underlined that all groups need to be consulted. He suggested finding alternative solutions.

The Italian representative was unhappy about the way Copa-Cogeca has looked at this issue and suggested that Copa-Cogeca was involved in the industry study. The Spanish representative mentioned that risk management is not the solution to all problems at field level. Certain molecules need to be withdrawn. It is important to find a way forward. The Polish representative mentioned that the intention should not be to take products out of the market but to find alternative molecules. When new products are introduced, there should be a toxicity assessment.

The Secretariat mentioned that Copa-Cogeca has presented two press releases, one of support for EFSA's opinion and one on the industry study in which there is no involvement of Copa-Cogeca, underlining that the situation is more complex and that we need to look at this from a risk mitigation angle.

Item 4.5: Update on contaminants (alkaloids and MRLs)

→ Jack F Kay, who is responsible for the Codex on MRLs for the Commission Codex on drug residues in food, has been invited to present the Codex work on MRLs [MI\(12\)362 \(rev.2\)](#). He asked members for comments before 15th March 2013.

The group insisted that we need to take into account the opinion of the stakeholders, referring specifically to the common paper Copa-Cogeca, FEEDEM on MRLs.

The Chairman underlined the need to limit antibiotic use and encourage a rational use of veterinary products and that not only the "human health" aspect needs to count when considering this aspect.

Due to the lack of time, the following points were not addressed:

- 4.2 Common Agricultural Policy – state of play regarding the decision-making process
- 4.3 The Commission's proposal to amend the Honey Directive – update on events in the European Council and the European Parliament
- 4.6. Health and veterinary issues
 - 4.6.1 Latest developments concerning new legislation on animal health – what are the implications for the beekeeping sector?
5. Revision of legislation on veterinary medicines
6. Final result of the DISCONTTOOLS project

Item 7: AOB

→ The Chairman informed the group about the next European Congress on Beekeeping due to take place on 9th, 10th, 11th November 2013 in Louvain-la-Neuve.