OPERA is a young, growing independent research center and think tank providing simple pragmatic solutions to support EU and national decision making. We bridge science and policy through a transparent platform to debate the right approaches for sustainable, intensive agriculture.

To have more information please visit our website www.operaresearch.eu or contact us: info@operaresearch.eu

OPERA is pleased to present you our new project:

**SUSTAINABLE INTENSIVE AGRICULTURE NETWORK**

Beyond the huge amount of knowledge available on agricultural policies and on the sustainable agriculture, during the consultations and interactions we had with agricultural stakeholders on the various policy issues in agriculture, including the reform of CAP and sustainable agriculture, emerged the need to improve the networking and the exchange of knowledge and information among academics, policymakers and business representatives.

**OUR VISION**

We believe that we can go further and adopt a pro-active approach to bring this knowledge to the debate between academics, stakeholders and policymakers to help the decision making process to be more efficient.

>> continue at pag. 4

**SIA Network**

- New publications pag. 2
- Sustainability pag. 4
- SmartCAP pag. 7
- Networking pag. 9
- OPERA news pag. 15

It is with great pleasure that we announce the new website of OPERA Research Centre. It can be accessed visiting: www.operaresearch.eu.

The new website presents a new interface and a clear navigation that will help users browse through the contents in an easy way. Our efforts is made to give you the possibility to check all the activities of the Research Centre. The main sections are: News, Documents and Events.

In the News, you can find all the news linked to OPERA activity, and the reports of all the external events in which our staff participated. In the Documents section, you can browse through all the documents issued by OPERA such as publications, reflection papers and reports of the events.

Last but not least, in the Events section there are all the events organized and co-organized by OPERA, with all the material presented in the event and the report. In this digital era, the website provides a platform for effective interactions.

We hope our new website can serve this purpose. You are most than welcome to visit our website, browse through the pages, gather useful information.

And do not forget to subscribe to our newsletter, to be always informed in time about our activities.
European policy has constantly adapted to answer to farmers’ needs and market requirements at the same time, putting in place measures to protect human health and the environment.

As the policy has been paying a greater and greater attention to health, environmental safety and sustainability, a new and stricter Plant Protection Products Package has come into force.

The new Directive on Sustainable Use of Pesticides together with the Regulation for placing PPP on the market explicitly mention IPM as key practice.

Member States (MSs) are called upon to promote the use of Integrated Pest Management and of alternative approaches or techniques such as non-chemical alternatives to pesticides.

The aim of IPM is to limit the occurrence of pests, using a mix of methods like low - cost available biological or natural control methods, agricultural practices, farm management decisions and chemical pesticides as a targeted method of action.

OPERA experts have been mapping the elements of the IPM concept and defining existing practical solutions to set up a comprehensive package of guidelines to assist stakeholders in choosing the right approach that would better answer to the legislation requirements and promote IPM as a sustainable farming practice.

Their work has been published under the title “IPM seen from the perspective of Sustainable Use Directive Objectives”.

The Directive for Sustainable Use of Pesticides that was adopted as part of the Pesticide Package has started the 14th December, 2011 and will be a turning point regarding the implementation of IPM as Member States shall have to take all necessary measures to promote low-pesticide-input pest management, giving wherever possible priority to non-chemical methods IPM therefore becomes not a differentiated standard of production, but a tool available for all farming activities.

The principles of IPM consist of the combination of all the available controlling methods, such as agronomic practices, choice of crop varieties, rotation of cultivations etc., while the use of control methods that act exclusively upon the target organisms such as pests, weeds and diseases are used as alternatives in order to counteract crop noxious entities.

The promotion of natural mechanisms of control in the frame of the ecological requirements is the priority of the system.

Furthermore, the use of pesticides should be targeted.

The concept of IPM requires some precautionary or supportive measures to be considered in order that the natural benefits are taken into consideration. Such measures could be regarded as indirect plant protection, covering a choice of appropriate resistant/tolerant cultivars, optimal crop rotation, adequate cultivation techniques, balanced fertilization and irrigation practices, protection and enhancement of important natural enemies by adequate plant protection measures and utilization of ecological infrastructures inside and outside production sites to enhance a supportive biological control. The eight points of the Annex recall the adoption of agronomic measures, monitoring, threshold levels, specificity of application, preference for non-chemicals if providing satisfactory pest control, resistance management and check of results in relation with the applied measures.

Any practical IPM approach cannot be applied before having a proper understanding of the biological, environmental, toxicological and economical processes both for the crop and for the entire agricultural system of a specific area.

Article 14 of the Directive requires MSs to take all necessary measures to promote IPM implementation essential for the success of reducing pesticide risks.

The legislation is not proposing an innovative approach to IPM, but actually recording and promoting a set of widely recognized principles, within Annex III of the Directive.

Training is explicitly required by the SUD for the whole complex of measures, but it appears particularly relevant for IPM. Pest identification, presence estimation, threshold definition, timely application, technical application notions, product choice are examples of skills to be developed. Correct presence estimation is the bases for the threshold definition. This requires the expertise of trained advisors to plan interventions at the right time.

Several programs were implemented since the 1980s by national authorities like Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Spain and Austria.

These plans often were not truly IPM programs, as they mainly targeted the quantitative reduction of agrochemicals or the substitutions of some of them.

The major challenge for the decision makers will be to find economic resources to sustain the knowledge transfer, by directly providing or indirectly incentivizing the activities of training, information and research. Gradual, realistic targets are to be defined according to local conditions.

To download the document: http://operaresearch.eu/en/documents/show&id=1
During the summer of 2011, OPERA identified the need to produce a report on state-of-art information on the issue of pollinators in agricultural systems, but focusing more on the managed honeybees and wild bees (solitary bees, bumble bees).

An international Group of experts has been set up in order to produce the report.

The focus of this document is to gather the latest information available on the factors influencing the health of both managed honeybees and populations of native wild bees, including solitary bees and bumble bees. The report starts from the premise that declines in pollinating insect numbers can have significant adverse effects ecologically on the diversity of plant species and economically in the productivity of crops. However, up until now, the status and relative importance of the stress factors that may affect bee populations has been relatively unclear and, in many instances, widely disputed.

Whilst there is very limited information on the economic aspects of beekeeping across Europe, keeping bees on a small scale is widely recognized as being uneconomic. However, up until now, the status and relative importance of the stress factors that may affect bee populations has been relatively unclear and, in many instances, widely disputed.

The media frequently reports alarming numbers of colony losses, but in many cases the reasons for decline - which are typically complex and multifactorial in effect - are poorly investigated and the information given on overwintering colony losses is often misleading. Typically the implication is that decline in honey bee colonies is affecting all bee species, when the causes and effects are more often specifically related to the keeping of hived bees.

Whilst overwintering colony losses have increased by trend in the last decade, these are not significantly different for single years registered in the past.

When high colony losses are reported, most reports from Europe are about overwintering losses caused by the Varroa spp. mites, often linked with secondary infections by viruses and losses caused by Nosema spp.

The outcome of the multifactorial monitoring projects reported so far seems to suggest that the parasitic pest mite Varroa spp., which can be found in almost every apiary in Europe, is the main causative factor involved in honeybee colony weakening in Europe.

Controlling bee pests and diseases is seen as the essential factor for successful beekeeping over the years. Some countries made important efforts to implement specialized training programs for the recognition of diseases; in others this skill is gravely underdeveloped with beekeepers.

Additionally, as beekeeping techniques, cultural traditions and climatic conditions vary around Europe, greater attention should be paid from the policy side to the development and implementation of good beekeeping guidelines. New beekeeping techniques and improved knowledge have resulted in improved bee health and higher quality and quantity of honey yields.

Studies, in particular multifactorial studies undertaken on the honey bee, indicate that losses of pollinators are likely to be caused by a combination of several pressures, including habitat loss, climate change, diseases, beekeeping practices, invasive species and pesticides.

Habitat destruction has been determined to be one of the major causes of pollinators’ decline.

The EU legislation on pesticides relies on two complementary texts (Regulation 1107/2009 and Directive 128/2009) that aim to ensure a high level of protection of humans and the environment.

From the regulatory perspective, the knowledge on the possible impact that pesticides may exert on the honeybee is far more detailed and documented than for other pollinating species or species of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

The evaluation of the impact of pesticides on bees has been undertaken for many years in Europe, using guidelines developed by OECD and EPPO which provide four methods to assess the impact on honeybees and on other non-target species.

To download the full document: http://operaresearch.eu/en/documents/show&cid=30
MISSION
The concept behind the SIA Network is to promote and facilitate debate and dialog between academics, policy makers and business representatives, in order to create and promote economic, social and environmentally sustainable production solutions for the development of European agriculture within the wider context of addressing the challenges associated with food security, resource use, social acceptance and economic efficiency.

MEMBERSHIP
The membership will be organized in two tiers as follows:

1 - Individual Members, organized as:
   • Permanent members which will include a Core SIA Group made up of “active” key scientists from different EU institutions and key policy makers, selected based on technical experience and knowledge. An appointment to this Core SIA group should be recognised as a prestigious appointment.
   • Associated members which will include scientists, diplomats from member states, farmer or industry associations based on free subscription.

2 - Organisational Partners – this will be constituted by organisations which would agree to support the activities of the SIA Network:
   • Leading members Members in this category will participate to the activities of the platform and to the meetings of the Executive Board and decide on the strategy and activities of the Network.
   • Participating members Members in this category will have the possibility to participate to all activities of SIA Network and be members of the Task forces.
   • Associated members Members in this category will have the possibility to attend to the activities of SIA Network.

OUR OBJECTIVES
• The work and outputs of this Network need to be practically based and should focus on consolidation of existing science and knowledge:
  • to provide and communicate new knowledge and practical guidance on SIA;
  • to shape public and political opinion on agriculture in the EU by providing sound and pragmatic technical and policy recommendation.

The SIA Network will be launched in the 6th Stakeholder Roundtable on CAP Reform on the 26th of March 2012.
(see the list of future events in the last page)
BROWSE (Bystanders, Residents, Operators and Workers Exposure models for plant protection products) is a multi-institutional project between 8 different institutions funded by European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme.

Its main objective is to improve the assessment of risks to operators, workers, residents and bystanders by delivering new and improved models of exposure, thus improving the basis for targeting of risk reduction policy. OPERA is contributing significantly to stakeholder consultation, the development of risk indicators and the development of new types of communication and training material.

For this reason, OPERA co-organised a workshop (on the 14-15 April 2011 in Brussels) as start of a consultation process in order to get opinions, ideas and expectations from the most relevant stakeholders.

This process ended with a second workshop organised by OPERA on the 14th-15th December 2011 in Brussels.

The first day was focused on developing the detailed plans for BROWSE contributions to improving training and awareness-raising. In particular, it was gathered latest information on current activities and initiatives for training and communication, including activities of the Commission, Member States, ECPA and trade unions, and identify the most effective ways for BROWSE to contribute to this.

On the other hand, the second day was focused on developing the detailed plans for BROWSE contributions to the development of harmonised EU risk indicators.

Again it was gathered latest information on current activities, especially actions already underway or planned by the Commission, EUROSTAT and EFSA to implement recommendations of the Arcadis report and identify the most effective ways for BROWSE to contribute to this.

Based on the outcome of this process, the OPERA/Università Cattolica assisted by the University of Newcastle (providing guidance on risk communication and perception) and the Benaki Phytopathological Institute, will prepare detailed plans for the design of training and communication materials to be produced by BROWSE as well as design risk indicators models for operators, workers, bystanders and residents that will be suitable for use as harmonised EU indicators.

If you would like to have more information about the project, please visit: https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/browse/index.cfm

To have more information about the 2nd BROWSE Stakeholder Meeting and to download the presentations: http://operaresearch.eu/en/events/show/&tid=28
Sustainability in the Italian Viticulture

The wine sector is of paramount importance in the Italian economy and is fed by environment primary inputs, such as soil and water resources, while contributing to energy resources demand. Moreover, the wine production is considered as one of the best identified component of our “culture” of rural environment and agricultural landscape management and protection, and it is associated to food safety and consumer’s health.

Within this framework, the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Department for Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Energy launched a National pilot project in July 2011 in order to evaluate the wine sector sustainability performance, based on Water & Carbon Footprint calculation, in collaboration with:

- some major Italian wineries, selected on a geographic and product basis (Fili Garcia & Co, Masi Agricola, Marchesi Antinori, Mastroberardino, Michele Chiarlo, Montevibiano Vecchio, Planeta, Tasca d’Almerita and Venica&Venica);
- Agroinnova, Centre of Competence, University of Torino;
- OPERA, Research Centre in Sustainable Agriculture, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Piacenza;
- Biomass Research Centre, University of Perugia.

The project idea is based on the awareness that a large share of Italian wine companies have already adopted sustainable strategies and production techniques in the vineyard. In addition, the wine sector took steps to modify cellars and marketing systems in order to improve environmental performances. At the same time, these techniques and skills have allowed to develop an adaptability of the viticulture to climate variability, enabling both to preserve and expand the production capacity, and to protect large agricultural areas from marginality and degradation risk.

Under these assumptions, the project aims to add value to already tested techniques and processes and to identify actions to strengthen the supply-chain environmental quality by combining the knowledge deriving from tradition together with scientific and technological innovation.

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Website at: http://www.viticolturasostenibile.info/
As a result of the public debate, on 12 October 2011 the European Commission has published its plans to reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2013. This blueprint aims to strengthen the competitiveness and the sustainability of agriculture and maintain its presence in all regions, in order to guarantee European citizens healthy and quality food production, to preserve the environment and to help develop rural areas. Since its creation, the CAP has always been adapted to respond to the challenges of its time. Significant reforms have been made in recent years, notably in 2003 and during the CAP Health check in 2008, to modernize the sector and make it more market-oriented.

The Europe 2020 strategy offers a new perspective. In this context, through its response to the new economic, social, environmental, climate-related and technological challenges facing our society, the CAP can contribute more to developing intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth. The CAP must also take greater account of the wealth and diversity of agriculture in the EU’s 27 Member States.

The Common Agricultural Policy is due to be reformed by 2013. A formal public consultation on the CAP post-2013 had been undertaken last year when the Commission published a policy paper setting out different options for the future CAP. On 12 April 2010 the Commissioner invited all interested EU citizens and organizations - whether or not they work in the area of agriculture - to join the debate on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy, its principles and objectives. This on-line debate stayed open till 11 June 2010.

The intention was to give as many EU citizens, stakeholders, and think tanks, research institutes and others, as possible the opportunity to have their say early on in the reflection process about the future of the CAP. Their responses will provide input to the policymakers.

As a result of the public debate, on 12 October 2011 the European Commission has published its plans to reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2013. This blueprint aims to strengthen the competitiveness and the sustainability of agriculture and maintain its presence in all regions, in order to guarantee European citizens healthy and quality food production, to preserve the environment and to help develop rural areas.

The key aims of this reform are:

- to ensure that the competitiveness of all European farming safeguards our food security;
- to lay down the foundations for long-term competitiveness that is both environmentally and economically sustainable;
- to ensure that agriculture flourishes throughout Europe;
- and finally, a spearhead objective: to simplify the CAP.

The legal proposals are accompanied by an impact assessment that evaluates alternative scenarios for the evolution of the policy on the basis of extensive quantitative and qualitative analysis.

For more information you can access the following links on the European Commission website:

Legal proposal for the CAP after 2013

5th Roundtable of Stakeholders on the Reform of the CAP

How much greening makes the CAP green?

With the support of Mr. Giovanni La Via, MEP and Mr. Carlo Fidanza, MEP on 19th of October, in the European Parliament, OPERA organized its 5th Roundtable on CAP Reform to address one of the major themes of the reform – greening measures for the European agriculture.

Participants were asked to contribute to defining how much greening makes the CAP green as a policy. The concept reflection paper elaborated by OPERA, and distributed to participants, was aiming to ask the right questions about this process. Prof. Ettore Capri, who presented the concept paper of OPERA, underlined the need to focus on discussing social, economic and environmental aspects together when debating about policy. He mentioned that a “bad greening” for the CAP needs to be avoided and discussed if it is appropriate to be more focused on the environmental problems without consider the economic problem that farmers have to face in this particular moment.

As a main feature of the document OPERA proposed a conceptual model to measure sustainability to be included in the policy so that the progress of European agriculture is captured and communicated to the public. The conceptual “+/-” model is based on two categories of indicators.
the first to capture the positive developments in using resources (where indicators would need to be maximized) and the second to capture reduced impact of agricultural activities (where indicators would need to be minimized).

Prof. Paolo De Castro stated the reemergence of the food security issue; the challenge now is how to guarantee food security, in a situation of resource scarcity. The reform of the CAP should not fall into the trap of jeopardizing the production potential of Europe and its ability to supply the markets with food in the requested quantity and quality. He summarized the debates in the EP while the second report was drafted saying that the majority of the MEPs would support a greening of the policy but not at all costs.

MEP McGuinness, shared the same needed caution in the reform process as to ensure that at the end we will have a positive impact on agriculture, consumers and on the general state of food security. While endorsing the objectives of sustainability, she underlined the necessity to acknowledge the economic consideration on agriculture and to ensure that farming is viable as a business so as to guarantee the presence of the farmers as managers of the environment. A greater emphasis is to be put on research and knowledge transfer so as to develop new and innovative production methods.

In this context, Ms. Shelby Matthews suggested that the focus of the CAP should not be on how farmers produce but how productive the farmers are. The solution proposed by Ms. Matthews is not the greening but a green growth: this approach aims to harmonize economic growth and sustainable use of environmental resources. For the European Commission, competitiveness and effectiveness are the key words for the future of the CAP, as underlined by Mr. Pierre Bascou. In the same time he pointed out that the environmental challenges need to be taken into account in the policy. According to the Commission, the present proposals will allow to produce a positive impact on the environment without affecting the productive capacity.

Mr. Giulio De Capitani expressed the need for further simplification, subsidiarity and flexibility of the CAP with a major focus on strength of sustainable competitiveness. About greening in particular, the first simulations show that 1/3 of the farmers would not be able to meet the requirements of the “greening”. The agriculture of the plans will have a reduction of the payment up to 80% especially in sector like rice and cattle, without interest to ask for payment nor base nor greening. Large part of the region is at risk to be left to an intensive agriculture without cross-compliance effects not only greening effects. 10.000.000 of Lombardy’s taxpayers will not probably agree with a CAP that will not create perceptible added value in a territory impacted by an unbalance urbanization without contrast in an agriculture sector sustained by CAP.

Ms. Susanne Languth expressed the point of view of the food industry. Languth underlined the importance that the CAP has not only on the agricultural sector but in all the food chain and consumers. For this reason the CAP should promote research and innovation to increase the productivity of the farmers and to create a sustainable agriculture.

Another controversial point raised up on the discussion was the effectively application of the CAP.

Prof. Paolo De Castro analyzed the situation of some countries, as Italy France and Spain, which have not followed the regionalization process. For that reason, the application of the CAP will be difficult.

Prof. Paolo De Castro closed the roundtable with optimism regarding the new CAP: “We should not be in rush to reform the CAP we are creating the CAP of the future, we want to make it in a good way and we cannot fail on that!”

To download the presentations of the roundtable: http://operaresearch.eu/en/events/show/&tid=3
Within the World Food Day/Week program, the international conferences addressed the challenging issue of the sustainability of food production and consumption. The Conference, organized in collaboration with Federalimentare, represented an occasion to continue the dialogue between the private sector and the FAO, reinforced in 2009 with the Carta di Milano. The Conference was organized also to contribute to the preparation of the 2012 RIO+20 International Conference on Sustainable Development as well as to the 2015 EXPO in Milan “Feeding the Planet—Energy for Life”.

The aim of the conference was to identify concrete actions engaging the private sector toward the goal of sustainability of food system, diets and food and nutrition security for all. In particular there were addressed the following main issue:

- The sustainability of food production and supply chain
- Social responsibility
- Research, Innovation and training
- Nutrition, biodiversity and sustainable diets models

Nowadays several challenges need to be addressed in order to make sustainable our world. In particular two of them were discussed deeply: the dangerous increasing of raw food price and the land grabbing phenomenon. In this sense, says Luigi Scordamiglia (Vice-President of Federalimentare), the Italian food model constituted by localism, advance technology and balanced diet could represent the way forward and for this reason we should take the opportunity of the next EXPO 20015 in Milan to promote it.

On the other hand particular attention should be paid on the efficiency of the food chain, said Heracio González-Alemán (Secretary-General of the FIAB), rebalancing the structure and promoting a transparent food chain, especially referring to the price, in order to contribute to market stabilization.

Furthermore, the efficiency of the food chain should be achieved also pointing on a correct innovation. That means an innovation that through more productive techniques or technologies, can contribute to the quality and diversification of the production guarantying in the same time environmental benefits.

From the perspective of the private sector says Peter Kenmore (Principal officer, Plant Production and Protection Division FAO), innovation should be focused especially on the packaging, the use of water and the consumption of energy. Indeed, the use of limited recyclable materials together with an appropriate consumption of water using renewable energy are the main issue and challenges that should be addressed by companies.

The private sector should also focus on finding a correct communication strategy in order to inform the public about their efforts in implementing best practices, social responsibility activities, food safety program, etc.

An effective solution can be represented by the use of a certification system based on accepted scientific data and methods to clearly show the impacts of the entire food chain on the environment; in particular, referring to the GHG emissions, the water consumption, biodiversity and the natural resource used.

Last but not least, addressing global food challenges will require new levels of collaboration through public-private partnerships and other initiatives. “No one company, university, NGO or government can solve these problems alone” says Merriman (Senior Government and Biotech Affairs Manager Europe, Pioneer Hi-Bred). Thus, it is necessary to work together in a concentrated effort involving all the members along the food chain and the other relevant stakeholders to really achieve sustainable production and sustainable diets model decreasing the negative impacts on the human health and on the environment.
The 14th Symposium of Pesticide Chemistry was edited by the Institute of Agriculture and Environmental Chemistry of the Catholic University and was held in Piacenza-Italy, from 30th August - 1st September 2011. General and special subjects regarding to environmental fate of pesticides, modeling, risk characterization, risk prevention and mitigation were covered. Invited speakers identified new problems and areas required research. Platform presentations, poster sessions and plenary discussions set the stage for an overview of current progress in research. Regulatory issues were also considered. The background for constructive interaction between researchers working in the field of study: the control and forecasting of pesticide fate in the “air, plant, soil, biota and water system” was set up.

The 14th edition of the Symposium was subdivided into sessions dedicated to laboratory and field studies, modeling, risk characterization, risk prevention and risk mitigation, regulatory procedures and policy issues. The program was of interest to environmental scientists from research organizations, academia, industry, governmental and NGOs.

The main themes addressed were:
- Laboratory Studies
- Field Studies
- Modeling
- Risk Characterization
- Risk Prevention and Risk Mitigation
- Regulatory and Policy issues

Presentation and paper available at: www.symposiumpesticide.org

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On the 22nd September in Budapest, the Plant Protection and Soil Conservation Directorate and OPERA Research Centre co-organized the workshop entitled “Implementation of the Directive for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides in Hungary”. This stakeholder workshop gathered representatives from all the relevant stakeholders such as, the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development, different associations, the private and the academic sector up to a number of 30 participants.

The Ministry of agriculture was represented by the Deputy Head of Department, Mr. Gabor Szalkai, who focused his presentation on the “Elements of the Directive 128/2009 and the requirements for its implementation”. He presented the framework and some elements to be used in choosing the priorities in the transposition of the Directive to national legislation and the implementation of the National Action Plan.

The first contribution of OPERA Research Centre to the debate was focused on the link between the CAP and SUD. Mr. Alexandru Marchis, Policy Team Coordinator insisted on the existing link between the SUD requirements and the criteria for cross-compliance in CAP. These are to be taken into consideration in the implementation so as to construct requirements for farmers which are pragmatic and achievable. SUD also works as a bridge between the risk assessment and risk management as well as it creates opportunities to improve the agricultural practice.

Bernd Hommel from Julius Köhn-Institute explained the structure of the NAP in Germany. He presented the revision of the NAP as well as, the targets set by Germany in reducing the risk. In the case of Germany, the NAP is constructed on a concept which derives the overall goals into objectives and targets which are then linked with indicators.

Germany is using an index indicators to monitor progress in risk reduction. Concluding, he stated the need of broad public debates & stakeholders participation (that in the case of Germany have taken place since 2002) and the need to strengthen advisory services, field experiments and R&D.

Dr. Rita Ban from St. Istvan University presented results of relevant research projects for sustainable use of PPP and more specifically the ENDURE network. She gave a description of the structure of the project and the most important conclusions and tools developed which are relevant for the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive.

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, contributed through the presence of Dr. Callie-ra Maura who presented the guidelines that were developed for the sustainable use of pesticides in Italy.

The document was developed in a multi - stakeholder process.

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, contributed through the presence of Dr. Callie-ra Maura who presented the guidelines that were developed for the sustainable use of pesticides in Italy.

The project targets to develop instruments for the easy identification of the areas to reduce or mitigate risks and to provide the appropriate solutions at farm level. The comprehensive guidelines developed are accompanied by a diagnosis software to identify bottlenecks in the whole lifecycle of pesticides at farm level.
The role of mitigation measures in risk reduction presented by Ms Amalia Kafka, scientific officer of OPERA Research Center; focused on the OPERA recommendations for the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive. The closing presentation was delivered by Dr Andras Kadar representative of the pesticides industry. He presented the view of the industry on Risk Indicators for the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive in a presentation entitled “HUCPA views on implementation of the Directive 128/2009 in Hungary”.

The presentations were followed by a breakout sessions where three different groups discussed on the priorities for the National Action Plan, especially focusing on solutions for aerial application; the control of machineries for pesticide application and the education and training which needs to be provided for the proper use of pesticides.

The workshop concluded in a plenary session, where the participants were asked to reply to a number of questions, using an electronic response system, to identify the priorities of the National Action Plan.

One of the most important conclusions that arise out of the replies of the participants refers to the belief that the productivity should not decrease because of the measures chosen in the National Action Plan. They also identified that, the task of educating the farmers should be given to the public sector; while training seems to be the top priority into the NAP.

The risks and potential acute and chronic effects on human health as well as on risk management measures in areas used by the general public need to be one of the priorities in the communication campaign to be developed in the plan. The IPM was considered as the element that would minimize the risk when adopted into the Hungarian NAP, followed by the promotion of Best Agricultural Practices.

CEUREG Forum XV

The 15th Technical Conference for pesticide registration experts from Central and East Europe (CEUREG Forum) was organized in Bratislava on the 6th-7th October 2011.

The forum gathered representatives from the regulatory authorities of Central and Eastern European countries, as well as a representative of the European Commission, European Crop Protection Association and OPERA Research Center. The forum consisted of four sessions where different topics of high interest on the field of agriculture were discussed.
The first session referred to the Regulation 1107/2009/EC that replaced the Directive 91/414/EC. The representative of the Commission presented the first experiences from the application of the Regulation while the reaction of the Member States expressed the difficulties that they face in its implementation.

One of the common problems was managing the work load generated by the application of the regulation. Another problem that appears refers to the difficulties on interpreting the regulation. The facts that the existing standards within the Member States are different, as well as the short time for practical experience are two elements that make more difficult the adoption of the regulation.

The second session was about Directive 2009/128/EC Sustainable Use Directive of pesticides. The representatives of the Member States presented the current situation in their country regarding to the difficulties they face on the transposition of the Directive to national legislation and on the drafting of the National Action Plans. Some of the topics that were put on the table by the Member States were related to implementing Integrated Pest Management and specific measures to reduce risk and to monitor progress. Furthermore, the need of harmonized Risk Indicators and their place in the National Action Plans was an issue.

There were given some examples regarding the possibility to use a selection of social, environmental and economic Risk Indicators.

The overview of the current situation in the CEUREG Region States as to the Integrated Pest Management and organic farming was discussed at the third session of the forum. There were presented the general provisions of the Sustainable Use Directive; the general principles of Integrated Pest Management and the state of art regarding to the above mentioned practices in relation with the future steps that have to be followed.

Crop specific guidelines on IPM and successfully implemented elements of the Sustainable Use Directive in some Member States as well as some plans to promote IPM were on the table. The fourth and last session of the forum was focused on an update on the international, regional and relevant country developments since the previous CEUREG Forum. Firstly, were presented the outcomes of the 11th International HCH and pesticides forum that took place in Azerbaijan in September of 2011.

The OECD pesticides’ working group objectives and activities were also a subject in the program. The debates were focused on the strategic approach in pesticide risk reduction and the possible elements for a vision for the next decade. A survey that took place during the 15th CEUREG Forum on the definition and regulation of “other products” has provided some relevant information on how different countries manage this issue.

Mainly, there were mentioned the regulatory status; the areas of assessment and the plans to change the current status in each country.

Finally, candidate countries to European Union presented their progress report on the harmonization procedure, problems experiences and expectations regarding to the development in pesticides registration in their countries.

The 15th CEUREG Forum closed with drafting the final document where the conclusions of the two day meeting were highlighted and confirmed.

The next CEUREG Forum will be organized in Vienna in October of 2012.

More information and presentations are available at this link: http://www.ceureg.com/15/presentations/
National best agricultural practices award **BIOENERGY ITALY 2012**

UNCEM, Legambiente, Cremona Fiere and the German foundation DLG, with technical support of Chimica Verde set up, for the second year, the National Best Practice Award **BIOENERGY ITALY 2012**, dedicated to farms and local authorities that offer the best examples of good agricultural practices applied in compliance with land use and natural resources, energy efficiency and the interest of agriculture and local communities.

Building on the success of the last edition, it was decided for this year to establish also an award for the best thesis that deals with this topic.

Prof. Ettore Capri, as member of the national scientific committee was responsible for criteria setting to evaluate the various experiences and select the winners among the farms, local authorities and students.

The award ceremony will be held during the festival Vegetalia (15-17 March 2012, Cremona, Italy).

For further information, please contact: gabriele.sacchettini@operaresearch.eu
List conferences attended and invited

- Bergerac - 11th Workshop on Sustainable Plant Protection Techniques in Fruit Growing
- Jurata - Konferencja Szkoleniowo-Naukowa Polskiego Towarzystwa Toksykologicznego
- Cagliari - ECM Annual course on sustainability development of the veterinary sector
- Roma - Le Giornate Fitopatologiche, Analisi dello stato d’implementa del Piano Nazionale
- Warsaw - Launch of the Bayer programme in sustainable development of the agricultural farms
- Piacenza - Azienda Tadini, Food Quality and Sustainable Production.
- Piacenza - Hospital, Food and Environmental Quality and Human Health.
- Jesi - AssoEnologi, Course on Principle of sustainability
- Udine - National Conference organized by Agronomist Professional Order on SUD
- New Delhi - Sustainable Waste Management of additives in products: A global challenge
- Herning - Danish Crop Production Conference
- Barcelona - 33 Jornadas de Productos Fitosanitarios
- Brussels - European Parliament, Land Grabbing in Africa and Europe’s role in Global Food Security
- Brussels - Lunch Debate- LiveWell for Low Impact Food in Europe: Eating our way to a healthy planet
- Brussels - European Parliament, Greening the CAP

Forthcoming Events organised by OPERA

- 16 March 2012, Lubljana
  Workshop on the Directive for the Sustainable Use of Pesticide
- 26 March 2012, Brussels
  6th Stakeholder Roundtable on CAP Reform:
  “Priorities for research and development in EU agriculture – How do we develop Sustainable Intensive Agriculture?”
- 26 March 2012, Verona - Vinitaly
  Project presentation by Italian Ministry of the Environment
- 27 March 2012, Brussels
  Forum for the Future of Agriculture - FFA2012
- 12-14 April 2012, Paris
  First workshop Heroic Project
- 17 May 2012, Piacenza
  National conference on “Sustainability in practice”

Next Working Group

Best agricultural practice for the sustainable use of PPP

In the next newsletter:

- OPERA and the international EXPO 2015
- OPERA and Rio 20 + 20
- OPERA 6th Roundtable and the Forum for the Future of Agriculture
- CaffExpò the OPERA Caffè Literant
- PIACECIBOSANO Project
New staff

Ms. Chiara Corbo (chiara.corbo@operaresearch.eu)

Chiara obtained a Bachelor Degree in Economics at the University of Bari. Furthermore, she completed a Master in Marketing. During the University years, she gained a strong knowledge in Management, Business Administration, Marketing and Communications. During her studies she worked at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, in the Directorate for Economic and Financial Cooperation. During her four months internship she developed a project for promoting Italian small-medium enterprises abroad, and for the attraction of foreign investment in our territory. After her studies, she moved to Milan and she pursued different work opportunities, in Value Team (ICT consultancy, Business Process Management Area) and Danone Italia - in the Supply Chain Area. Actually, she is completing her PhD in “Agrisystem” in Piacenza, at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. Moreover, since January 2010 she works in consultancy, following projects related to the Sustainable Development, Green Management and Communications. Chiara will be working in OPERA Biodiversity sectors.

Partners

Informatica Ambientale S.r.l. is a research and computer science company operating in environmental, territorial and agronomy fields. Partners come from different fields of technology and scientific research and they plan to offer to the customer (either it is a private company, the public administration or a scientific institution) a real support in order to deal with environmental matters and to provide a full range computer science service. Informatica Ambientale researchers have a solid background in Operation Research because all of them spent several years of work in a Politecnico di Milano Consortium, facing with complex environmental problems. For example they designed and completely implemented an innovative transport system (Dial a ride, Car Pooling) for the city of Milan (Italy), in which complex optimization algorithms (network flow algorithms) were used to find the minimum path and maximum capacity of a bus fleet on the entire urban network.

Eng. Andrea Di Guardo (diguardo@iambientale.it) is the contact for Informatica Ambientale.

For more information: http://www.iambientale.it/EN/HomePage.htm

CO2print L.l.c is a young company established in August, 2010 engaging the team of the consultants to design and develop the projects related to the accounting, management and mitigation of the carbon emissions and other environmental impact categories. In that respect the team of consultants work in the carbon and environmental footprint analysis developing the methodologies and calculation tools in the partnership with different industrial and public sectors organizations with an aim to realize their business and financial benefit. CO2print provides a comprehensive carbon footprint assessment, identifying current major emission sources through whole life cycle of products or services and opportunities for savings in the future as well. CO2print's consultants support the comprehensive data collection process, prepare detailed calculation models and reports and recommend potential emission reduction measures within industrial facility or public organization. The final value of company's different environmental impacts creates a base to establish its good carbon and environmental management plan reducing energy costs and developing a robust environmental credentials in accordance with legislation requirements.

Ms. Ivana Radulovic (ivana.radulovic@minamb.org) is the contact for CO2print.

Press release

Company Communication srl is the advertising agency choosen by OPERA for press release, communication and events. Company Communication, based in Milan, started its activities more than 15 years ago. It works in the advertising, graphic design, print materials, fairs and events areas.

Company Communication is the ideal partner for professionals and public or private companies that want to create or modify their own image with a creative and innovative approach and a solid marketing background.

Company Communication offers a full service for typographic and digital printing and providing as well a web service, audio/video editing and radio commercials. Its portfolio includes multinational companies such as Syngenta, Novartis Animal Health, FamiCord, Frutarom and local companies such as Sivam, Aspirapolvere Service, Assosementi, Patavium and others.

Pier Colnaghi (pier.colnaghi@companyadv.com) is the contact for Company Communication srl.