



European Research Alliance
ERA Pesticide Free
Towards a chemical pesticide free agriculture

NEWSLETTER #21 EVENTS

11 March 2025

The [European Research Alliance 'Towards a chemical pesticide free agriculture'](#) is pleased to share with you a special edition of its Newsletter, in which you will find the announcement of the next General Assembly of the Alliance and a list of recent events organized by Alliance members

Next General Assembly of the Alliance in USAMV Bucharest on May 20, 2025

The General Assembly of the Alliance will be held in Bucharest, Romania, on May 20, 2025. It will be hosted by USAMV.

Location: University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest
Address: 59 Mărăști Blvd., Sector 1, Postal Code 011464, Bucharest, Romania.

The formal General Assembly will be held on the 20th May, from 9.00 to 13.00. It will be followed by a scientific workshop from 14.30 till 18.00.

The General Assembly will be part of a series of events in close relationship with the activities of the Alliance. This includes a field tour, on May 21 in the morning, the Management Committee of the COST Action TOP-Agri Network (May 21 pm and May 22 am) and a meeting the Acropics project.

To confirm your participation, please kindly register at the following link: <https://forms.gle/2P9bG1b7Am9etRNw5>

We hope to meet you all in Bucharest and we thank our Romanian colleagues for setting the organisation of this exciting week.

For more information, please contact: [Laura Tintă](#)

The 67th meeting of the Croatian Society for Crop Protection in Opatija, Croatia

During the 67th Croatian Plant Protection Conference, the COST-T0PAgri network CA21134, with the support of University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture organized the side events on plant protection and transition to pesticide-free agriculture in the Western Balkans region on 4 and 5 February in Opatija. Members of the COST Action (16) and plant protection specialists from Croatia and neighboring countries participated in the panel discussion „How to promote the implementation of IPM principles in agricultural production?“ and in the interactive workshop „Farmer education - the most important step for the full implementation of IPM“.

During the panel discussion, in which participants from France and Croatia took part, ideas were exchanged on how to promote the application of IPM principles in agricultural production. The European perspective on the need to reduce the use of pesticides was presented by Dr. sc. Christian Huyghe, COST 21134 T0PAgri project leader. The representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture took part in the debate and explained how the legislator promotes IPM through the creation of common agricultural policy interventions. In this part, it was important to hear the experience of France, which has organized several programs that include intensive research activities, the organization of demonstration farms and the development of a system to promote non-pesticide and environmentally friendly plant protection measures (e.g. "Pesticide saving certificate"). The extension service representatives shared their experiences with farmer training, which they believe is critical to the successful application of all IPM principles and to success in reducing pesticide use. The example of growers and certifiers in the Global GAP system (which is based on the IPM principles and requires specific evidence and analysis of products) was used to illustrate the problems farmers face and what the biggest obstacles are in practice. In addition to the careful elaboration of Common Agricultural Policy measures that can encourage farmers to adopt practices that contribute to the prevention of the occurrence of harmful organisms and the conservation of biodiversity, the need for increased efforts in the training of farmers in the field of integrated pest management was emphasized, as well as the need to carry out research activities at local level aimed at exploring alternative solutions for the suppression of harmful organisms and to review or establish decision thresholds for the main harmful organisms and to disseminate any knowledge gained to farmers. A special topic of the workshop was education and training. Around 40 participants from Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina exchanged ideas and thoughts on the existing educational systems for training farmers and analyzed available new forms of education and new forms for their organization.

Contact : [Renata Bazok](#)



Photo credit: Renata Bazok

COST Action TOP-Agri-Network C-K workshop in Mainz: designing the future European Pesticide-Free cropping systems

The EU-funded **Cost Action TOP-AGRI-Network (CA21134)** targets the transition “**Towards zer0 Pesticide AGRiculture**” to pave the way for agriculture free of synthetic and nature-derived pesticides that negatively impact environment and human health. Within the TOP-AGRI-Network, researchers across Europe contribute their knowledge and expertise around the common objective of pesticide-free agriculture to enable a redesign of the food system as a whole.

The Working Group 4 of the **COST Action TOP-Agri-Network** convened from **February 11-12, 2025, in Mainz, Germany**, to advance discussions on “**Redesigning Cropping Systems Without Chemical Pesticides.**” The event brought together **26 participants from 11 member countries**, including Croatia, France, Poland, Tunisia, Serbia, and Turkey.

This international workshop followed up on **18 regional Concept-Knowledge (C-K) workshops** held across more than **14 countries throughout 2024**. These workshops, planned and implemented by COST Action members, focused on **grain and viticulture cropping systems**, engaging a diverse range of stakeholders—including farmers, agronomists, students, researchers, and policymakers—alongside representatives from industry. **The results of the regional workshops were summarized and discussed with the aim of identifying ways to eliminate the need for pesticides in agriculture.**

The international workshop in Mainz was **organized by TOP-Agri working group members from Sweden (SLU - Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences) and Germany (University of Würzburg and ZALF - Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research)**. Participants engaged in **interactive scoring and mapping activities** and group discussions to explore European perspectives and innovative solutions for transitioning towards **chemical pesticide-free grain and viticulture cropping systems** while minimizing crop losses.

Key workshop outcomes included the identification of **critical knowledge gaps in preventative crop protection research**, which will be synthesized into a comprehensive scientific paper. These findings will contribute to shaping **future research agendas and policy frameworks** for sustainable, resilient agricultural landscapes in Europe.

For more information, follow **COST Action TOP-Agri-Network (CA21134)** on social media or visit our website: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA21134/>



Photo credit: Kathrin Grahmann, Zalf

11th PPPHI organised by JKI in Braunschweig, Germany, dedicated to Biocontrol and regulatory issues. An international attendance for an outstanding conference

About 80 attendees from science, regulatory agencies and biocontrol industry from nine countries attended the 11th Plant Protection and Plant Health International symposium, held in Braunschweig (Germany) on February 18-19. The symposium was co-organized by the Julius Kühn Institute and the German Society for Plant Protection and Plant Health. In four topic sessions, (i) further research needs, (ii) the potential and limitations of using microbes and application of whole genome sequencing, (iii) specific issues related to the selectivity and effectiveness of biological control agents, and (iv) future perspectives towards a successful implementation of biocontrol were presented from different viewpoints and intensively discussed. One of the key outcomes of the symposium was that improving and accelerating the implementation of biological control measures into agricultural practice, ranging from preventive conservative agronomic measures to the augmentative application of biopesticides, is instrumental in reaching the UN goals for sustainable development or the aims of the Farm-to-Fork strategy of the EU to reduce the negative impact of chemical pesticide use on human health and the environment.

For more information see <https://ppphi.plant-protection.net/>.



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