



European Research Alliance

## ERA Pesticide Free

Towards a chemical pesticide free agriculture

## NEWSLETTER #7 SWITZERLAND

6 December 2023

Every two weeks, this newsletter will be prepared by a different Alliance member.

Today we are happy to share a contribution from [the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL, Switzerland](#).

### Farming practices: Pesticide contamination and residues across Europe and Argentina

Massive use of plant protection products (PPPs) in farming led to high concerns in human and environmental contamination. Studies within [EU Horizon 2020 project SPRINT](#) were conducted to determine contamination levels and residues in human, non-target species, environment and dust in ten European countries and Argentina.

In two recent publications, Silva et al. (2023) and Navarro et al., (2023) show that pesticide mixtures are recurrent across all studied matrices, farming systems in all countries and multiple residues were detected in indoor dust. They also found that organic fields have lower pesticide contamination levels than conventional fields and indoor dust samples from organic farms showed lower number and levels of pesticides. Most of the detected PPP residues are hazardous to non-target species and levels of insecticides were found in higher concentration than herbicides and fungicides. In parallel, glyphosate, AMPA and pyrethroids were most common in dust and non-approved active ingredients were still high in human and non-target species. Almost half of the PPPs quantified are classified as highly hazardous.

The researchers conclude that it is of high priority to reduce use of synthetic and hazardous PPPs in farming and novel strategies will be proposed within the project ends.



#### References:

- Navarro, I., de la Torre, A., Sanz, P., Baldi, I., Harkes, P., Huerta-Lwanga, E., Nørgaard, T., Glavan, M., Pasković, I., Pasković, M. P., Abrantes, N., Campos, I., Alcon, F., Contreras, J., Alaoui, A., Hofman, J., Vested, A., Bureau, M., Aparicio, V., ... Martínez, M. Á. (2023). Occurrence of pesticide residues in indoor dust of farmworker households across Europe and Argentina. *Science of the Total Environment*, 905. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2023.167797>

- Silva, V., Gai, L., Harkes, P., Tan, G., Ritsema, C. J., Alcon, F., Contreras, J., Abrantes, N., Campos, I., Baldi, I., Bureau, M., Christ, F., Mandrioli, D., Sgargi, D., Pasković, I., Polić Pasković, M., Glavan, M., Hofman, J., Huerta Lwanga, E., ... Geissen, V. (2023). Pesticide residues with hazard classifications relevant to non-target species including humans are omnipresent in the environment and farmer residences. *Environment International*, 181. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2023.108280>

### Innovative nature-based solutions to ensure food security: Biocontrol industry meeting in Basel

The 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the Annual Biocontrol Industry Meeting (ABIM, [www.abim.ch](http://www.abim.ch)) 2023 welcomed over 1800 participants from 58 countries, highlighting the essential role biocontrol plays in providing better solutions for plant protection and securing the future of food and farming. Organised by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture [FiBL](#) and [IBMA](#) (International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association) the 18th edition of ABIM, 23- 25 October, was filled with inspiring discussions, insightful presentations, and innovative ideas.

Innovations have always been a driving force in the biocontrol industry. Chosen from over 35 entries, the 2023 winner of the Bernard Blum Award for Novel Biocontrol Solutions is DCM for their product PEA-02, second place is Signs for their product ‘NoReds’ and third place is Koppert for their product ‘Nezapar’. We are looking forward to see these biocontrol solutions in practice.

Biocontrol has the potential to give more and more farmers access to solutions enabling them, and future generations of farmers, to manage their crops productively while enhancing biodiversity and building resiliency on their farms. ABIM demonstrates the increasing impact and pivotal biocontrol solutions play in the transformation of plant protection and agricultural practices ultimately contributing to resilient agriculture and food security worldwide.

**Save the date:** The 19<sup>th</sup> edition of ABIM takes place 21-23 October 2024



### Sustainable use regulation for pesticides scrapped by EU parliament

The European Parliament on Wednesday November 22nd rejected a plan to cut back reliance on pesticides in agriculture in another setback in Europe-wide efforts to protect the environment. This is a strong backlash to green policies amid cost of living crisis. Together with other decisions, Europe risks losing green investment to other regions. New green policies face tougher time to get passed and amid broad scientific consensus, European politics seems to have no proposal to tackle the biodiversity crisis, secure long-term food security and protect people’s health. This decision of the EU parliament compromises the urgent improvements foreseen in the Farm to Fork Strategy, undermining efforts to ensure an effective protection of EU citizens and ecosystems from hazardous pesticides.

This is the newsletter of the European Research Alliance *Towards a chemical pesticide free agriculture*

Visit the Alliance’s website: <https://www.era-pesticidefree.eu/>

This issue has been prepared by [FiBL](#) as a member of this Alliance.

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