

Crop protection in horticulture. How to rescue growers from punishment for shortfall of control agents?

The EU and its Member States have been working on reducing the use and risk of pesticides for decades. This has largely been achieved by regulating the authorisation of pesticides under Directive 91/414/EEC and Regulation (EC) 1107/2009. Consequently, the number of active ingredients authorised for pest and disease control in ornamental crops (e.g. flowers) has dramatically decreased.

Now, growers face a shortfall of control options, and there are growing numbers of reports on unlawful use of pesticides in ornamental crops. The Food Inspection Authorities try to change this by imposing fines on these growers. Furthermore, retail companies start to impose restrictions on pesticide residues on ornamental products. In case of exceeding they reject the products supplied. On the one hand, the growers are thus justifiably punished for unlawful use of pesticides. On the other hand, their violations indicate that

growers find themselves in a desperate position. The question is how this unsatisfactory situation can be solved.

The objective of this paper is to improve understanding of the positions and interests of the involved parties in relation to pesticides and pest control. We therefore study how pesticide use in ornamental crops is framed by the various parties involved. Furthermore, power relations in both the knowledge and value chain are studied. Starting from the interests and power relations we explore some options for sustainable development of crop protection in floriculture. Our suggestion is that new interactions and initiatives have to be developed between flower growers, value chain partners and/or knowledge partners. Bringing partners together for collective action in a public-private partnership for plant health research or under a national agreement are considered to be the most promising options. The lesson learned is that the relations between society, business, research and government need innovation in governance of sustainable crop production.