

## Communication on the sustainable use of pesticides

Dear Mrs Hellsten,

I would like to make a comment on the Commission's Communication on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides. There are a number of elements of this strategy that need to be further considered as means for achieving sustainable agriculture and use of pesticides in Europe.

Agricultural sustainability is mistakenly thought to be exclusively concerned with the environment; however it has also has economic and ethical implications. Sustainability requires the 3 E's in an integrated approach

- a. Recognises everyone's social needs
- b. Protection of the environment in an efficient way
- c. Manage global natural resources in a prudent way
- d. Maintenance of stable levels of economic growth and development

For example organic farming is only one of various production methods in addition to integrated farming and conventional farming. Unfortunately, consumers often lack a clear understanding of organic farming and the organic farming practises, which is an important market but one that should not be unfairly preferred over other agricultural approaches.

Organically grown crops will give lower yields and there is no proof that organic production is safer. Given the lower yields, the expansion of organic farming methods would require that a significantly higher proportion of land be cultivated whereas resources of farmland are limited. This is not sustainable in the long term. I believe that integrated systems like those applying the concept of Integrated Crop Management (ICM) offer better long-term solutions in guaranteeing sustainable production to deliver adequate quantities of food at affordable prices to the consumers, while taking care of the environment.

Integrated Crop Management (ICM) practices gives the tools to farmers and growers to achieve sustainability in agriculture. Pesticides are an essential element today and in the future of ICM and this should be considered within the envisaged Thematic Strategy.

I hope that you also share my opinion about the importance of integrated farming – how a farming system must be truly integrated in order to achieve sustainable agriculture in Europe.

With kind regards,

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