

Higher tier approaches in the risk assessment of plant protection products and their links to protection goals

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The risk assessment of plant protection products is becoming increasingly complex in the face of new guidance documents and data requirements. One of the consequences of this is that emerging and new non-standard effect and exposure assessment approaches have been required to be developed in order to keep pace with the evolving regulatory framework. These can be either desk-based theoretical approaches or complex and novel study designs or a combination of both. One of the challenges scientists face is identifying practical and scientifically justifiable solutions to improve the ecological and contextual representativeness of risk assessments in order to meet the requirements of the protection goals and regulatory authorities. This is amplified as the acceptability of higher tier approaches in regulatory risk assessment is more and more challenged. Scientists must be able to communicate complex risk assessments in a clear and robust manner that can be understood, and thus correctly interpreted, by all stakeholders. The natural ecosystem is complex and variable, and thus a balance must be struck between the level of realism of the risk assessment and designing practical solutions. Field studies represent the most relevant tools for risk assessment, providing the most realistic data sets. However, their lack of acceptability by regulators, particularly the use of recovery endpoints, could lead to us losing these most valuable tools from the risk assessment. Ecological models also have a promising future within higher tier risk assessments, potentially able to bridge the gaps between experimental data and real world scenarios. However, again, the acceptability of these models by regulators currently limits their use in regulatory submissions. Abstracts are welcomed from industry, government bodies and academics for this session which aims to provide a forum for the sharing of knowledge and experience in linking higher tier approaches to protection goals and the regulatory acceptability of such approaches. Abstracts on either experimental (laboratory, semi-field or field based) or theoretical approaches, or a combination of both, are welcomed. We also welcome presentations looking to the future, addressing possible future data requirements and risk assessment issues. If sufficient abstracts are received, it is anticipated that the session will be organised into aquatic and terrestrial themes.