



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE  
Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (Seville)  
**Agriculture and Life Sciences in the Economy**

MARCH 2010

## **EUROPEAN COEXISTENCE BUREAU**

### **SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECOND PLENARY MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP FOR MAIZE OF 9-11 DECEMBER 2009 SEVILLE, SPAIN**

The main objectives of the Second Plenary Meeting of the Technical Working Group for Maize (TWG Maize) were:

- To discuss the outcome of the second round of stakeholder consultations
- To discuss the first draft of the Best Practice Document and to resolve the remaining issues
- To get information about the current development of MAPOD – one of the decision-aid tools for coexistence
- To collect experts' opinions on future ECoB work and possible activities of TWG Maize

TWG Maize members, the European Coexistence Bureau (ECoB) staff and other IPTS staff, as well as representatives from DG Agriculture and Rural Development, DG Environment and the JRC Institute for Health and Consumer Protection, and an invited expert from INRA participated in the plenary meeting.

The draft agenda (see attached document) was approved.

#### **1. Stakeholder consultations**

The second stakeholder consultations in the context of the ECoB were carried out by DG Agriculture and Rural Development in October 2009. The summary of obtained stakeholders' comments is available on the ECoB website (<http://ecob.jrc.ec.europa.eu/stakeholder.html>).

Seven stakeholders' organisations (out of around 30 involved in the consultations) sent comments on the First Draft of the Best Practice Document. Both general and detailed comments were made.

The general comments, which considered mostly the scope and the approach taken in the document, were discussed under this point of the agenda, while the detailed comments and

requests for changes were dealt with together with the TWG Members' comments, when the relevant points of the BPD were discussed.

The TWG Maize decided that the approach taken in the document will not be changed. The scope of the document will also not be extended. The issues pointed out by the stakeholders – maize seed production and post-farm steps of the production chain could be addressed by possible future working groups if necessary.

## **2. Approach to development of the Best Practice Document – the use of "worst case scenario"**

According to some of the comments received the use of the words "worst case scenario" in the Best Practice Document may not be precise. The wording was used in the context of parameters which could not be taken into account in the development of coexistence measures.

TWG decided that the words "conditions favouring pollen mediated gene flow" will be used instead. The ECoB secretariat will revise the document and change the wording where necessary.

## **3. Volunteers and their management**

The question as to whether possible volunteer appearance is a coexistence issue and in which cases (possible cultivation of non-GM maize in the field where GM maize was grown in the previous season by the same farmer or by another farmer, i.e. due to land sell or lease) was discussed.

The issue was considered relevant and will remain in the document.

The requested amendments regarding the passing of information in the case of rented or sold fields and general recommendations regarding management practices were considered unnecessary, as well as the recommendation to establish mandatory practices on volunteer management.

The possible change of current agricultural practices in the future was taken into account; the appropriate sentence "With zero tillage or minimum tillage the presence of volunteers should be regarded with a greater attention" was added to the chapter on volunteer management.

The information about countries where management practices are foreseen by law will be amended as requested by stakeholders – Romania will be removed and Germany will be added to the list.

## **4. Seed purity and seed storage**

The requirement for farmers to use certified seed lots included in the First Draft was discussed. The approach was changed so that the possible use of non-certified seeds, e.g. of landraces, is not excluded. The text proposed in the First Draft was amended as follows:

"The seeds used by farmers should comply with EU legislation for seeds, which may establish a threshold below which the presence of authorised GMOs shall not have to be labelled."

The request for extension of recommendation on the use of separate storage rooms for GM and non-GM seeds was withdrawn by the submitting TWG Member.

## **5. Isolation distances**

The recommendation of the isolation distances for whole plant use was discussed and it was decided it remain in the document; the information about the use of adjusted results of grain maize experiments will be added.

The use of isolation distances for grain maize production will be recommended in the case of fields where the use of harvest (grain or silage) is not determined at sowing time.

The recommended isolation distances will remain as ranges; the values will be rounded - 5 m precision was agreed.

Additional information explaining the origin of proposed values will be added to the tables summarising the recommended isolation distances.

The TWG will not propose isolation distances necessary to comply with 0% admixture level, as requested by some of the stakeholders involved in the consultations.

It was agreed as well that the proposals regarding the distances which are necessary to comply with labelling thresholds at the farm gate, corresponding to agreed seed threshold scenarios, will be highlighted in the tables.

## **6. Buffer/discard zones**

The issue was discussed on the basis of available scientific information and existing segregation practices applied in Member States. The following recommendations were agreed:

- Buffer zones may replace all the necessary isolation distance; 1 m of buffer can replace 2 m of isolation distance,
- The use of buffer zones may be recommended as a coexistence measure for all traits, including herbicide resistance.

The partial replacement of isolation distances with buffer or discard zones could allow the lowering of the necessary isolation distances; however precise measures cannot be proposed due to the limited data available.

The fact that buffer zones partially replacing isolation distances are a management practice used in some Member States will be mentioned in the document. The results of the monitoring of the effectiveness of this measure will be provided by the TWG Members and included in the document.

It was discussed and agreed that the statement concerning discard zones as the measure which should be applied by a non-GM farmer will be deleted from the document.

## **7. Temporal isolation**

The recommendations included in the First Draft of the Best Practice Document, based on the proposals of the TWG Members, were discussed and will not be changed.

The Slovenian Member will submit the data concerning the possible use of different maturity classes as a coexistence measure; the use of the staggered sowing dates is not recommended for Slovenia.

The data on possible use of temporal isolation in the case of France should be submitted by the TWG Member.

## **8. Non-biological sources of admixture: machine management, drying, transport; costs of practices**

The comments concerning the proposals of best practices included in the first draft were discussed. This included possible spillage management during transport, the possible use of dedicated machinery for harvesting and transport of each crop type, the assessment of possible admixture levels resulting from shared use of harvesters and the associated costs of machinery cleaning.

The following amendments were agreed:

- The text on seed driller cleaning will be amended; the requirement that seed storage tank should be emptied before moving from GM field will be added to the document
- The recommendation to clean tractor wheels was deleted.

The information about associated costs will not be amended due to the limited data available.

## **9. Areas where coexistence is difficult to achieve**

Current text on areas where coexistence is difficult to achieve will be changed – (e.g. areas will be changed by situations). The possibility of the occurrence of these situations where recommended practices may be difficult to apply will be mentioned in the document.

The following factors, which may influence the applicability of recommended practices, will be listed in the document:

- small and elongated fields
- small field depth
- level of adoption of GM maize.

In the cases where coexistence may be difficult to achieve by the application of on-farm measures the use of alternative measures will be recommended. Those practices include:

- communication between farmers to minimise problems
- voluntary based clustering of fields
- voluntary agreements on labelling harvests as containing GM.

## **10. Knowledge gaps and research needs**

Two additional knowledge gaps were identified:

- Possible levels of admixture resulting from the shared use of seed dryers, means of transport and storage facilities by the GM and non-GM farmer.
- The influence of land topography on the level of outcrossing in maize.

The background information on topography as a factor influencing outcrossing will be added to Chapter 3.

Moreover the knowledge gap concerning the efficiency of discard zones was extended to buffers and discard zones partially replacing the isolation distance.

It was decided that the chapter concerning knowledge gaps and research needs will be deleted from the document. The information about identified knowledge gaps will be moved to Chapter 3, reviewing the available scientific information.

## **11. Other changes to the Best Practice Document agreed during the meeting**

The TWG Maize decided that the definitions of the terms used in the text will be included in the document. The definitions will be placed in a separate chapter.

It was decided as well that any references to the existing scientific data will be removed from the Best Practice chapter of the document. If necessary, data will be moved to Chapter 3 containing the review of the available information on maize outcrossing and management practices.

## **12. Scientific presentation – Developing new tools for the management of coexistence (A. Messean, INRA, France)**

According to Dr. Antoine Messean, the uniform coexistence measures are efficient but may not achieve the proportionality principle. Therefore there is a need for the development of coexistence decision tools based on predictive models. Such models should be implementable under a regulatory framework and adapted to the local conditions. They should minimise the risk of non-compliance with the targeted threshold while taking into account the uncertainty or unpredictability of some factors.

The coexistence aid tools may address different situations, like public or private decision-making, and may also be used at different levels, i.e. intra-field, field, farm, silo or regional. Several existing models were mentioned and discussed. The current ongoing research aimed at the improvement of the MAPOD model was presented.

## **13. Experts' opinions on possible future ECoB work and the use of the TWG Maize**

During the round table the experts expressed their interest in the continuation of activities of the TWG Maize. The issue of the monitoring of the efficiency of the coexistence measures was stressed and agreed by all participants. The harmonised approach to the monitoring of such efficiency, and, possibly, the development of guidelines for the monitoring plan were considered necessary.

The TWG Members also expressed the need for periodical revision of the Best Practice Document as new data will become available in the future. The document should also be amended as the new traits and events are approved for cultivation. The timeframe of such revisions remains to be decided upon.

It was agreed that both tasks could be addressed by the existing TWG Maize, as a continuation of the ongoing activity.

The need to address the issue of coexistence for the different crops, currently in the EU regulatory pipeline, was also mentioned by some TWG Members. Another point of interest would be the development of guidelines for management of insect and herbicide resistance.

## **14. TWG work programme – Next steps**

The following indicative schedule was agreed:

Jan 10- Feb 10	ECoB – Second Draft preparation
Mar 10-Apr 10	Consultations of second draft (TWG and stakeholders)
Early May 10	Final TWG meeting. Approval of BPD

May 10-June 10      Revision, formatting, proofreading, internal check.

End June 10      Delivery of the document to DG AGRI

**European Coexistence Bureau (ECoB)  
Technical Working Group for Maize (TWG-Maize)  
Second Plenary meeting**

**9-11 December 2009**

**European Commission (EC), Joint Research Centre (JRC)  
Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTs)  
Edificio Expo, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room 116, calle Inca Garcilaso 3, 41092 Seville, Spain**

Organisers: Emilio Rodríguez-Cerezo, Marta Czarnak-Klos

**DRAFT AGENDA**

**Wednesday, 9 December 2009**

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- 09:30-09:50 Welcome, Meeting overview (accept agenda, logistics)  
09:50-10:50 Discussion on stakeholder consultations and submissions  
*10:50-11:20 Coffee*  
11:20-12:10 Approach to development of the Best Practice Document – the use of "worst case scenario"  
12:10-13:30 Volunteers and their management  
*13:30-14:45 Lunch*  
14:45-15:30 Seed purity and seed storage  
15:30-16:30 Isolation distances  
*16:30-17:00 Coffee*  
17:00-18:30 Isolation distances - continuation of discussion (includes scientific presentation of statistical metanalysis performed by JRC IPTs – L. Riesgo)  
**18:30 End of meeting Day 1**  
**21:00 Working dinner**

**Thursday, 10 December 2009**

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- 09:30-11:00 Buffer/discard zones  
*11:00-11:30 Coffee*  
11:30-12:30 Temporal isolation  
12:30-13:15 Machine management and costs of associated measures  
13:15-13:30 Transport of harvest  
*13:30-14:45 Lunch*  
14:45-16:45 Areas where coexistence is difficult to achieve  
*16:45-17:15 Coffee*  
17:15-17:45 Scientific presentation: Developing new decision tools for the management of coexistence (A. Messean, INRA, France)  
17:45-18:30 AOB – issues to be discussed suggested by TWG Members  
**18:30 End of meeting Day 2**

**Friday, 11 December 2009**

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- 09:30-10:30 Continuation of discussion if needed, otherwise Knowledge gaps and research needs  
10:30-11:30 Discussion  
*11:30-12:00 Coffee*  
12:00-13:00 Actions to be taken, next steps  
**13:00 End of meeting**

