Reducing and improving the use of plant protection products:

Less is better

Écophyto 2018 two years of action
Summary of the 2008-2010 Report
Techniques for sparing use of plant protection products do exist and need to be disseminated as widely as possible for immediate deployment, and all users, from the amateur gardener to the farmer, must be guided in the direction of integrated methods of protection.

The principle of integrated pest management presupposes the existence of a programme of bioaggressors surveillance for knowledge of their spread and adjustment of the action taken in order to limit the use of chemical control as far as possible.

Key statistics

Developing tools to control treatments: the epidemiological surveillance network
- Over 1,500 plant health bulletins have been published to date and are available free of charge on the websites of the regional directorates of food, agriculture and forestry,
- Over 8,000 individual plots are under regular observation,
- Over 2,700 observers are active in the field.

Disseminating techniques for the sparing use of plant protection products: the farm network
- Nearly 200 pilot farms have committed to this in fourteen regions. National roll-out to approximately 1,000 farms by the end of 2010 is in progress. There will be 2,000 farms by the end of 2011.
- 37 training farms are also engaged in the Ecophyto programme.

Training in the safe use of plant protection products

More sparing use of plant protection products along with safer use in order to control the risks to public health and the environment require high levels of training and accountability for all concerned: distributors, advisers and users.

The requirements for training relate to regulatory compliance, adherence to good practice in their use (e.g. safe conditions for operators and management of effluent) and knowledge of the integrated pest management techniques (use of prevention strategies) that limit the need for plant protection products.

Key statistics
- Training has already been provided to over 17,000 individuals.
- 30,000 is the target for December 2010.

Research:
coordination for speedier innovation

Various avenues for exploration under Ecophyto 2018 have been defined in the areas of agronomics, equipment and techniques for application and the socio-economic issues.

A number of existing projects are adding to the sum of knowledge contributing to the achievement of the Ecophyto target. Specific Ecophyto funding is used as a source of leverage to accelerate research under the programmes concerned.

Indicators for monitoring progress on Ecophyto 2018 targets

In order to measure the reduction in plant protection product use targeted by Ecophyto 2018, a reference indicator for monitoring progress has been defined through discussions between experts, civil society, industry professionals and official agencies: this is the NODU, (nombre de doses unité) the number of dosage units applied by French agriculture as a whole.

The NODU indicator makes possible an assessment of the intensity of the use of plant protection products along with changes in techniques. Changes in NODU from year to year will allow progress on the Ecophyto plan to be monitored. These changes are presented in an annual bulletin, the first of which was published on 6 October 2010.

Rolling the plan out in the regions and France’s overseas territories

The roll-out of the plan in the regions is intended to allow local actors to be mobilised with due consideration for each area’s specific organisational, agronomic and socioeconomic features. On it will depend the plan’s success and credibility.

In to permit its deployment across the whole of national territory, the Ecophyto 2018 plan is rolled out and if necessary adapted at regional level. Regional action plans are currently being drafted or in the process of validation.

For more information, please contact the directorate for your region (DRAAF).
To sum up:

Following on from the Grenelle consultation process on environmental issues, the Ecophyto 2018 plan embodies the commitment given by the authorities, industry professionals, and representatives of civil society — the plan’s co-authors — to cut the nationwide use of pesticides by 50% in the space of ten years, if possible.

The most notable goal of Ecophyto 2018 is to reduce the dependency of farms on plant protection products, while at the same time maintaining agricultural production at a high level in both quality and quantity terms.

How?

- by disseminating as widely as possible among users and their advisers information on known techniques for economic use of plant protection products and by improving the information given to farmers in real time on the distribution of crop diseases and pests with a view to improving the targeting of treatment,
- by ensuring that every actor in the chain is fully competent: distributors, advisers and professional users of plant protection products,
- by injecting energy into agricultural research into crops that require less chemical protection and by communicating the results of that research to the widest possible audience.

To find out more

The document entitled “Ecophyto 2018: two years of action / 2008-2010 Report” describes the main advances of the Ecophyto plan over this period, the plan’s launch phase. It was submitted to the meeting of the National Committee for the guidance and monitoring of the plan on 6 October 2010.

This document and the full report can be downloaded from: agriculture.gouv.fr/ecophyto-2018

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