

Newsletter 14 – February 2016

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New TOPPS¹ Water Protection partners now starting the dissemination phase

The new TOPPS Water Protection project has now been running in most participating countries for about 6 months. It aims to develop the basis for managing potential risks in order to reduce losses of Plant Protection Products (PPP) to water. With the "new countries" TOPPS extends its activities to Greece, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Portugal, and the Netherlands; while activities in the "existing countries" Belgium, Spain, Italy, France, Germany and Poland continue. New TOPPS partners are now integrated into the multi-stakeholder network, developing and locally disseminating adapted Best Management Practices (BMPs) to farmers, advisers and other stakeholders. The main objective in the new countries is to create the foundations for developing awareness and supporting BMP implementation. Key project steps include:

1. Get the new partners trained
New partners were intensively trained in theory and practice at the TOPPS - academy at the University of Turin in June 2015 (4 full days).
2. Transfer of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and local adaptations
Local versions based on existing BMPs to reduce PPP losses to water from point and diffuse sources have been developed (BMP book for advisers / BMP flyers for farmers).
3. Materials supporting execution of risk diagnoses, presentations, courses and a training framework have been developed.
4. **Disseminate BMPs and conduct trainings / demonstrations**
Starting in 2016 and through to the first quarter of 2018 the main focus is on dissemination of BMPs. The challenge is to provide training which suitably combines theory and practice. Feedback received from previous experience in other countries shows that the practical part is especially appreciated and has the most impact.

TOPPS - partners in the new countries:

Partners in all the TOPPS countries are supported by national crop protection associations.

Greece: University Thessaly, Volos

Department of Agriculture Crop Production and Rural Environment.

The University is located in the most important agricultural region in Greece. Main mission is to promote knowledge transfer through research and education in agriculture. The University is well integrated into various international projects.

Romania: University of Agricultural Science & Veterinary Medicine, Cluj-Napoca.

The University is located in the Northwest of Romania and covers a broad spectrum of agricultural sciences. The TOPPS project works with the department of agricultural engineering. Activities are also coordinated with soil sciences and other disciplines as needed to mitigate runoff.

Hungary: Private consulting company specialized in soil science.

Training and demonstration activities will be organized at various private and University

¹ www.TOPPS-life.org

demonstration farms. This will allow TOPPS to achieve a broad geographic coverage of the country with dissemination and demonstration activities.

Slovakia: Water Research Institute (WRI); Agro-Institute (Bratislava) and Professional Service, Santovka.

The WRI conducts comprehensive water management research and other related activities resulting from the needs of the water sector in the Slovak Republic. Its main activities are aimed at research and development, professional water management, consulting services and training.

The Agro- Institute is responsible for organizing education and trainings for farmers, and will provide facilities and logistical services for TOPPS.

Professional Service is a private company, which provides consulting and training in the area of application techniques.

Portugal: Confederacao dos Agricultores de Portugal (CAP); Confederacao Nacional das Cooperativas Agricolas e do Credito Agricola de Portugal (Confagri). Lisbon

Both partners are farmers' organisations. Among other activities they provide training and education programs for farmers.

Netherland: the TOPPS project collaborates with the locally established toolbox consortium, which provides recommendations to farmers to protect water. Various partners are involved, including: LTO (Farmers Union), Agrodīs (distribution&advice), Waterboards (responsible for water quality), and Nefyto (Crop protection association). The consortium developed a so called "farm scan" in 2015, which has already received 500 farmer responses. This online tool helps to create awareness, to understand current practices and will be used to monitor implementation of BMPs.

