



Fruit and Horticultural European
Regions Assembly



Organisation of European Fruit and
Vegetable Processing Industries



Debate on European Directive 91.414/CE

Health Protection Issues for Fruits and Vegetables Production

Press Conference – Invitation

Fruits and Vegetables Production in Search of Solutions

Wednesday October 15, 2008 – 11 AM to 12 AM

European Parliament

PHS - Rue Wiertz/Wiertzstraat 60

Room PHS 0A050 B-1047 Brussels

In the presence of:

- **Anne Laperrouze** (Member of the European Parliament (MEP), ALDE¹ group)
- **Jean-Marie Beaupuy** (MEP, ALDE group)
- **Pierre Feillet, scientist, member of the Academy of Technologies and of the Academy of Agriculture**

Representatives of the different European productions

- Jean-Claude Moron (France : Apples national branch)
- Alessandro Dalpiaz (Italy : Apples production)
- Bernard Géry (France : Salads national branch)
- Jordi GINE (Spain : Head of the Vegetable Health Service of the *Generalitat de Catalunya*'s Department of Agriculture)
- Xavier Mas (France : Strawberries national branch)

Press Conference Programme: Evaluation from 2008 to 2012.

- **Global Food Challenge**

Questions on the quantity and the quality of fruits and vegetables production

Food price rise for consumers and unbalanced diet

- **Human Health**

Appearance of mould capable of producing natural contaminants in fruits -
mycotoxins - potentially harmful to consumers

- **Economic Issues and Land Settlements**

- **Diseases Development (mildew) and parasites**

- **A necessity: Research Development**

¹ Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe



Health Protection: Producers in Search of Technical Solutions

Suppressing medicines does not eliminate diseases.

Paris, October 7, 2008 - Europe has decided to commit itself to drastically reduce pesticides. Present debates in the European Parliament and in the Commission tend to strengthen an already strict regulatory pressure. The revision of the European Directive 91.414/CE will thus lead to the withdrawal of 80% of plants protection products by 2012. Although praiseworthy, such objectives have important consequences that must be taken into account. During the Press Conference on October 15 2008, observers of the fruits and vegetables European production will present the regulation's consequences for the 2008-2012 period.

Global Food Challenge

The production of fruits and vegetables has always faced multiple assailants (mildew, powdery mildew, fungi, insect pests, etc.). Producers protect their crops by involving in advancement and quality approaches. Such approaches aim to guaranty to consumers good, fine, healthy and respectful of the environment products. The lack of molecules or of replacement solutions opens the way for parasitism and diseases, thus leading to a significant production drop. The ultimate consequence for the consumer is an increase of the fruits and vegetables prices.

Human Health Issues

Fruits and vegetables production is regularly targeted by fungi attacks capable of producing natural contaminants - mycotoxins - potentially harmful to Man. Hazardous, intrusive and pernicious, such attacks have been increasingly monitored by the scientific community for 15 years.

Fruits and vegetables are all the more sensitive to mycotoxins when attacked by insect pests. Weather conditions such as strong rains and heat encourage the spreading of fungi and the risk of mycotoxins growth. If the producers can control that kind of risk, they are however hindered by their lack of molecules.



Economic Issues and Land Settlements

Orchards and horticultural farms offer a diversity of cultures essential to the preservation of biodiversity, as well as to tourism and the promotion of territories. They prevent the development of single-crop farming. Fruits and vegetables producers look after the landscape. The withdrawal of molecules essential to production could lead to a relocation of farms, thus aggravating the risk of crop standardization. This could trigger an unbalance in country planning, a loss of biodiversity and the appearance of a real “vegetable desert”.

As some NGOs point out: “Pesticides are like antibiotics ... They are not automatic”. However, no one thinks of simply prohibiting these medicines. Using them to cure a human being is standard procedure. His recovery is a matter of balance: the patient trusts his doctor’s dosage. The same applies to fruits and vegetables, under the risk of loosing the whole crop. On a daily basis, producers commit themselves to the preservation of the quality of fruits and vegetables. However, the use of protection products is not systematic and must be reasonably improved thanks to innovation (decision support tools, research for new molecules, education of producers).

European producers are sounding the alarm. How will they be able to maintain the current production of fruits and vegetables using the same quantity and quality standards, while the means to protect their crops in a balanced way are being denied to them?

The Action Group « SOS Fruits and Vegetables » (Collectif Sauvons les fruits et légumes) was created in France in November 2007. It brings together French producers, members of every branch and every professional sections, faced with identical issues, who have decided to unite in order to increase public awareness of the threats hanging over national production and of the means to fight them; the Action Group does not replace nor does it compete with the profession’s traditional organization ; it only aims to complete it efficiently.

AREFLH (Fruit and Horticultural European Regions Assembly) represents 28 European Regions standing for 40% of the continent’s production. The goals of the Assembly are:

- *Representing, defending and promoting the common interests of Fruits and Vegetables producing Regions.*
- *Organising and leading talks and cooperation between Regions, developing synergies, sparking off the implementation of actions and common programmes in order to comfort and promote fruits, vegetables and horticultural regional sections.*

- *Strengthen, with the support of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), representation of the Regions within the European and International Institutions, and facilitate their participation in the European Union’s expansion and in decision-making processes.*



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The Press Conference on October 15, 2008

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