



## **EU strategies for plant health and sustainable plant protection**

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### **Abstract**

The EU has two main regulatory frameworks in this area – one dealing with pesticides, the other addressing harmful organisms which do not exist, or are not widely spread in the EU.

With respect to pesticides, the EU has renewed, developed and strengthened its regulatory framework over the last 5 years so as to better reconcile diverging interests in terms of food safety and overall food security, protection of the environment and ensuring that farmers are able to protect their crops and remain competitive.

Three main areas are covered:

- the placing on the market of plant protection products: this includes stricter criteria, sharing of workload such that active substances are dealt with at EU level and specific products at national level, but with incentives for low risk and basic substances. It also requires that IPM is introduced from 1 January 2014
- sustainable use of pesticides: this aims to reduce risks and impacts on human health and on the environment, by promoting IPM and the use of alternative techniques
- maximum residue levels: these are an important tool for enforcing the legislation to ensure safety of foodstuffs.

The Community Plant Health Regime dealing with preventing the introduction and spread of harmful organisms, which has been in existence since 1977, is currently under revision. In summary, this blocks and regulates entry, movement and spread of pests/pathogens to plants and plant products, and imposes eradication and containment measures, as well as requiring certain other bio-safety measures.

The different types of legislation are supported by the EU Research and Innovation programmes, which fund collaborative research on generic issues such as integrated pest management, diagnostics and risk assessment as well as on specific diseases of broad EU concern, eg. Plum pox virus, pine wood nematode.