



**Copper reduction policies in Europe:  
Intervention from a stakeholder perspective**

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# Do we set the right priorities?

- Reliance on copper is heavily dependent on crop type and regional climate
- “Sustainable” copper reduction can only be achieved by strengthening organic plant protection strategies
- over-ambitious (national) reduction targets or phase-out plans put the future of the organic sector (with all its positive contributions to human health & the environment) at risk!
- “copper chaos” between EU member states is not helping the organic sector to develop and implement long-term copper minimization strategies!

# Successful copper reduction strategies need a participatory environment

- “Top down” research and know-how transfer strategies do not enable the organic sector to realise its full potential in minimising off-farm inputs like copper
- EU horizon 2020 offers great possibilities for participatory research initiatives, national research programs need to follow the EU example
- German copper reduction strategy: farmer-based / farmer-led research & innovation strategy stimulates implementation of new management approaches or substances - and results in significant copper reduction

# Research priorities from a stakeholders' perspective

- Optimize **functional biodiversity** for plant protection
- Develop innovative **management approaches** to **prevent** pests or plant diseases (crop rotation, mixed-crop systems, reduction or speeded-up degradation of fallen leaves to prevent the spread of apple scab or mildew,...)
- Support organic **breeding** initiatives for more **resilient plants**, do not waste money on genetic engineering
- Search for natural substances to strengthen/protect plants  
**But:** Do **not** desperately try to avoid copper or look for “silver bullet” to replace copper – better combine substances like sulphur with reduced amounts of copper!

# Copper reduction & regulation: are we pulling together – and in the same direction?

- Organic plant protection: **input reduction, natural substances**
- Regulation for Plant Protection Products (PPP) focuses on **synthetic substances**
- Organic PPP do not fit regulation designed for synthetic pesticides!
- Organic PPP have to “survive” **two authorization processes** -  
> Authorization procedures for organic PPP are not faster but **slower** than those for synthetic pesticides - this “mismatch” slows down development of organic PPP that could help reduce reliance on copper
- We need new **regulatory approaches!**