

The background of the slide is a solid green color with a repeating pattern of small, light green icons representing various organic products. These icons include fruits like apples, oranges, and berries; vegetables like carrots, mushrooms, and leafy greens; and animal products like cows, sheep, and fish. The icons are arranged in a grid-like fashion across the entire slide.

**Science Forum Biofach, 11th February 2016,
16:00-17:30**

Biofach, 11 February, 2016

Marco Schlüter, Director IFOAM EU

Frame Conditions: Situation of the Registration of Copper

There is a Task Force of 13 companies (coordinator M. Weidenauer) that is working on the registration of copper compounds as active substance in the EU

At EU-level

Actually, data base seem sufficient to cover a future registration of a maximum input of copper of 6 kg/ha and year.

The EU Copper Task Force is trying to cover even peaks of 8 kg/ha/year to allow a management that follows the actual specifications in the organic regulation: 30 kg/ha in five years where peaks are allowed of 8 kg/ha and year.

However, the process remains tedious and not completely predictable.



Frame Conditions: Situation of the Registration of Copper

At MS level

There will be different decisions for the specific maximum level depending of the specific conditions of the single crop species, the single regions, the MS policy ecc.

Responsible for the registration in the MS are the individual companies.

In the Northern MS the market for copper is small and the „image“ is negative so probably there will be few efforts to register copper in these MS.



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In the frame of the re-evaluation of active substances **at EU-level** copper is actually registered until 31.1.2018 (**Reg. EU 85/2014**) with the following conditions (SANCO/150/08; **Reg EU 2015/232**):

- Member States should pay particular attention to the amount of active substance applied and ensure that **the authorised amounts**, in terms of rates and number of applications, **are the minimum necessary** to achieve the desired effects.
- **The notifier** (*in 2009 it was MS, in 2015 this obligation was transferred to notifier*) shall initiate **monitoring programmes** in vulnerable areas where the contamination of the soil compartment by copper is of concern, in order to set, where appropriate, limitations such as maximum application rates



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At MS level Germany and Austria set a maximum level of **3 -4 kg/ha/year** (corresponding to the limit of their organic associations). Germany, Austria and Belgium realized intensive monitoring programmes of the soil contamination. Germany is funding also considerable research programmes for copper reduction in organic farming.

France is discussing about a maximum level of **4 kg/ha** and year – but the initiative is suspended actually due to the current registration process.

Italy is discussing about a general limit of **6 kg/ha** similar to organic regulation. In all these MS there are working groups consisting of authorities, farmers, researchers, associations and the Copper Task Force to discuss best copper management in the future.

Spain has not yet decided a national maximum level.



Frame Conditions: Situation of the Registration of Copper

Actually, copper is listed as candidate of substitution acc. to 1107/2009

The Copper Task Force has brought an action against the commission at 5 June 2015

- The applicant puts forward that scientific evidence indicates that Persistence, Bioaccumulation and Toxicity ('PBT') criteria, in particular persistence, are not appropriate for any inorganic substance, including copper.
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- Moreover, according to the applicant, the application of PBT criteria to inorganic substances is not consistent with other pieces of legislation that have been implemented in the field of regulated chemical substances (REACH, Biocides), where the non-applicability of PBT for inorganic substances has been recognized.
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- Finally, so the applicant claims, as far as candidates for substitution are concerned, the application of PBT criteria to copper compounds goes beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives pursued by Regulation No 1107/2009 and Regulation No 1107/2009 misinterprets the precautionary principle.
- Second plea in law, alleging, subsidiarity, that by including copper compounds within the scope of Implementing Regulation 2015/408, the Commission has infringed the principle of proportionality.



Copper in organic farming

Independent of the perspectives of further availability and registration perspectives of copper

Crops as vine, fruit and potatoes rely still too much on the use of copper
Following the precautionary principle and the idea of independence of off farm inputs we have to work hard on copper minimization

However: We do not need another product, we need another strategy!

Strategies for more resilient systems in organic vine, fruit and potatoe growing systems are urgently needed



Copper in organic farming

We need

- Programmes for organic breeding and the introduction of new varieties on the market
- Improvement of strategies to reduce the infestation pressure of fungal diseases
- Strategies for the minimization of copper and other inputs by optimization of application modalities
- New products undeniably suitable for organic farming that can be part of combined strategies

The best way to „defend“ copper is to need and use less copper!





Conclusions

The copper discussion is a chance and an example that we can take to explain to authorities our aim to reduce our dependence from external inputs and to achieve more resilient systems. This means funding for research!

There is no need for „copper bashing“ to achieve this.

The organic sector should take the copper discussion as base to present self confident the organic ideas for the development of more resilient systems and to demand for research based on farmers needs....