



Lab news

Because of the substantial burden anticipated for small businesses (especially the ornamental plant sector), operators would have the option of not joining this accreditation system, and in this case they would be subject to tighter official controls. In all cases, however, the businesses, whether or not they are authorised to issue their own PPs, should comply with general requirements of internal pest risk management to be defined at the Community level, which should go beyond mere traceability requirements for plant products.

These are the avenues for improvement the French NPPO hopes in the new European regulation, whose formal proposal by the European Commission is expected in 2013.

The French Plant Health Network (RFSV): a new tool for protecting plant health

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The national consultation on the health sector (Etats généraux du sanitaire) organised by the French Ministry of Agriculture in 2010 demonstrated the strategic importance of managing crop and forest health in order to reconcile the economic and environmental challenges of our agriculture sector.

With this in mind, the Directorate General of Food (DGAL) asked various bodies (ACTA – the Network of agricultural technical institutes, ANSES – the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety, INRA – the National Institute for Agricultural Research, and UIPP – the French Plant Protection Industry Union, which together make up the secretariat) to set up the new French Plant Health Network (RFSV). This network, which met for the first time in October 2011 at the initiative of ANSES, has grown rapidly since then and now boasts around a hundred members. Its role is to help improve knowledge of plant health.

For this purpose, the RFSV's mission is to foster research partnerships between public and private sector players, throughout the system, from the field to the testing laboratory. It seeks primarily to enhance diagnostic capabilities, while also investigating bioaggressor control methods.

On this basis, the network has identified priority objectives and ten working groups have been set up to address a variety of topics:

- Improving comprehension of the available offer in terms of analysis, skills and research; directories are to be compiled and compared to actual needs. A scheme for skills development is also planned.
- Identifying needs in terms of new laboratory analytical methods and pest control methods; innovative tools and initiatives will be proposed and tested. It will also be necessary to establish channels for transferring methods from public and private research laboratories to routine laboratories.
- Improving knowledge on the evolution of bioaggressors and their characterisation, as well as plant resistance and tolerance to them. Knowledge will also be developed in epidemiology, based on laboratory and field data.

For further information: www.rfsv.fr