Pesticide Training

Pesticide refresher training was held in Mullingar park hotel for all mushroom growers in Ireland on June 5th. The event was open to both growers and industry stakeholders to provide an update on the safe use of chemicals in the mushroom industry. Speaking at the event was Colin Heaney from Monaghan Mushrooms and Donal Gernon (Teagasc).

The following areas were covered on the day:

- Approved products – Labels, Application Rate, Timing and Application Method
- Integrated Pest Management
- SUD Registration as a Professional User
- Audit Preparation and Paperwork
- Residue Testing
- Chemical Store Requirements
A package was given to the audience on the day with documents such as pesticide usage records, chemical inventory records, advisory letter on pesticide use and all presentation slides. I would like to thank all who attended the session and I think it’s an event that should be held annually as it’s such an important topic and an opportunity for growers to get an update on products or new rules and regulations.

**Technical Update – Vivando**

The introduction of Vivando has been hugely successful in Ireland for the control Dactylilum. Since the product has introduced into the Irish market there has been an issue raised by auditor regarding the dilution volume of water to be mixed with Vivando which is stated on the product label. On the label the recommend spray water volume is 150ml/m², however this low water volume is an issue as most farms use watering trees or automatic watering systems that are designed to deliver litres of water per m² rather than very low volumes.
I brought the issue to DAFM to clarify their stance on the issue. Their response was that the spray water volume is only a recommendation and a grower is quite legal to apply Vivando using a larger volume of water as long as they do not exceed the amount of product per m². In summary this means a grower is allowed to apply the 1ml/m² of product through a watering tree or automatic watering system with a dilution rate of 0.5 litres or 1 litre of water per m² which is more achievable.

It’s important to note, going over the dilution rate may effect the efficacy of the product however growers can only apply a dilution rate based on their current watering system they have in place. Ideally we would like this water volume changed on the label to reflect what is actually possible in the mushroom industry, similar to the Sporgon label where it uses the terminology “up to 1.8 litres of water per m²”, however this could be a long process. If growers or auditors need more clarity on the issue please contact me.

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**Pilot Work Permit Scheme Checklist**

On May 14th, Heather Humphreys announced the new pilot work permit scheme to address labour shortages in the horticulture, meat processing and dairy sectors. It was aimed at making it easier for certain businesses in the agri-food sector to source workers from outside the European Economic Area (EEA). 500 work permits was
granted to the horticulture sector. The Horticulture Industry Forum has been working on the labour issue for some time and it is a very welcome initiative.

A review group to report to the Minister by late June on overall employment permits system to ensure it remains fit for purpose in a changing environment. Key criteria of the scheme include:

- minimum remuneration threshold of €22,000 (hourly rate of €10.85 based on a 39 hour week)
- specific obligations on the employers around the welfare and prospects of the foreign nationals employed.
- access to suitable accommodation and training in areas such as language skills.
- Permit fee €1,000 up to 24 months and €500 for six months or less.

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DEBI) have prepared a checklist to assist with applications which can be viewed on the link below:


The checklist requires employer and employee details, job description, pay details, payment details for permit, agent details (if using an agent to assist in the application
process) and also a long list of other information required.

Applications can be made online at https://epos.djei.ie/EPOSONlineportal#/app/welcome or manually by sending an email to EPforms@dbei.gov.ie.

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**Applications for CMP 2019 Capital Investment Scheme**

Applications are open to members of CMP who wish to apply for the 2019 capital investment scheme which allows growers to get a avail of 50% grant aid on farm machinery and equipment. I would encourage each grower to assess their current situation and make realistic investment plans for 2019 which you believe is feasible and provides a reasonable return on investment. Growers must also provide a detail specification on what type of equipment or machinery they are applying for. For example, if a growers is applying for a ruffler, they must state the size of the ruffler (1.2m or 1.34m), double or single axle, do you require a ruffler lift, etc.

Myself and Andrew Mulligan from CMP will be in contact with all CMP members over the next two weeks to organise a meeting to fill out the application. The deadline for application forms to be complete is July 13th.

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**Contact**

Please get in touch if you would like further information, if you have any issues you would like to discuss or topics you would like to hear more about.

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