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Mandatory education for farmers using pesticides
FINAL SUMMARY

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A Member of the Croatian Parliament was interested in the situation in some other European countries regarding the procedures farmers must go through in order to legally use, sell and deal with pesticides and other chemicals used for plant protection. Our questions were:

- 1. Do farmers have to undergo an educational process in your country in order to be given a licence for the use of pesticides? If so, how many hours does it last?**
- 2. What is the cost of the educational module for farmers and the exam?**
- 3. Is the expense of the educational module and the exam paid by those who are seeking the licence to use pesticides or is it subsidized? If it is subsidized, how much of the expense does the farmer have to cover?**

Situation in Croatia

1. According to the Croatian Law on sustainable use of pesticides it is designated that in order to legally use pesticides for professional use one must go through a 15 hour educational module before undergoing an obligatory exam. This is also a requirement for the continuance of use of pesticides that were in use before the new law.
2. The cost of the 15 hour module and the exam is approximately 50 EUR.
3. In Croatia the costs of the module and the exam must be paid entirely by those who are seeking the licence.

This request was sent on March 27th 2015 to Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and United Kingdom and we received answers from 7 countries.

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Please find the responses we received below:

1. AUSTRIA – BUNDESRAT & NATIONALRAT

As Austria is organised as a federal state, the legislation and application of provisions concerning plant protection products is split into federal tasks and tasks to be taken care of by the nine provinces of Austria.

Education of professional distributors of plant protection products is regulated on federal level. Sales personnel at professional distributors that do not have a suitable general education comprising expertise on plant protection products (like having attended an agricultural school) need to perform a special course (training) in accordance with Directive 2009/128/EC, with a minimum of 16 to 20 hours of training and including an exam at the end of the course. Such courses are provided by federal institutions (e.g. as “e-learning-courses”, and cost about € 140 to be paid by the professional distributor.

In principle, the same requirements apply to farmers, but they are regulated on provincial level and the training courses for farmers are provided by the provincial chambers of agriculture. Having a confirmation of participation in and completion of such a course is necessary to obtain a licence to buy plant protection products intended for professional users.

The length of time for these courses for farmers is normally also 16 to 20 hours and costs are roughly the same. In detail, it can be noted that the costs of the licence and the training courses for farmers may differ. In the Province of Lower Austria, for example, the costs of the licence amount to € 53, while, in general, the costs of the training courses for farmers average out from € 90 (subsidised) to € 220 (not subsidised), as in some cases the training courses for farmers are subsidised (but there are differences between the different provinces).

However, it has to be noted that many farmers in Austria have a specialised agricultural education (e.g. because they attended an agricultural college with a duration of up to five years). These farmers usually have broader knowledge on the use of plant protection products than what can be provided for by relatively short courses.”

2. CZECH REPUBLIC - POSLANECKÁ SNĚMOVNA

Act no. 326/2004 Coll., on phytosanitary care, provides that a natural person that professionally uses a "plant protection product" (which includes pesticides), must be a holder of a first level licence, if he or she uses such products under the supervision of a person who is a holder of a second or third level licence. A person who is a holder of a second level licence may professionally use such products him or herself or may supervise a first level licence holder.

A person who is a third level licence holder may supervise the provision of consulting services regarding plant protection against harmful organisms and regarding safe use of plant protection products, may supervise the distribution of plant protection products and may supervise the organisation and performance of the required educational course for persons applying for a first and second level licence.

A first level licence holder must undergo a basic educational course.

A second level licence holder must undergo the basic educational course and successfully pass a second level licence applicant exam OR must be a qualified plant health doctor¹.

A third level licence holder must either be a qualified plant health doctor or must pass a special exam.

The educational courses are governed by Decree no. 206/2012 Coll.

The first level course is 12 teaching hours. A teaching hour has 45 minutes.

The second level course is 15 teaching hours.

No third level course is required, only the passing of a third level licence exam.

The price of the educational course is not regulated by law, it is a market price. We have seen advertisements for such courses online indicating prices of around 1000 CZK for a first or second level course.

The payment of the educational module and the exam is not regulated by law. The price for the first or second level course is usually paid by the employer of the person, if he or she is employed.

3. FINLAND – EDUSKUNTA

In Finland the Plant Protection Products Act (1563/2011) contains provisions regarding training and certification for the use of plant protection products. According to the Act all professional users must be certified to use plant protection products, however undergoing training in processing and using plant protection products is voluntary. The certification will ultimately be required of all individuals who use plant protection products professionally in agriculture, horticulture and forestry. The certification must be renewed every five years.

The voluntary training (duration: 4-8 hours) and the certification cost in total approximately €50-150.

The expense of the training and the certification is not subsidized. However, the certification is one condition to be fulfilled in order to receive farming subsidy.

4. GERMANY – BUNDESTAG & BUNDESRAT

In Germany according to the Plant Protection Act of February 2012² - which implemented EU regulations - to use substances for plant protection, you have to have a certificate of proficiency attesting the necessary skills and knowledge in dealing with pesticides. The certificate is necessary for both users and sellers of pesticides.

If you are a farmer, it is already part of your professional training that you have got the necessary knowledge for handling pesticides. But even as a farmer you need a licence card and you regularly have to train on an approved training course on the new developments in crop protection every three

¹ A plant health doctor is considered to be a person who has obtained a master's or doctoral university degree in a plant health programme of study, OR must have obtained an academic qualification-professorship or assistant professorship in plant health, or must have completed a special university programme of study in plant health offered to holders of other university degrees.

² Gesetz zum Schutz der Kulturpflanzen (Pflanzenschutzgesetz - PflSchG). Only available in German. BGBl. I 2012, 148, 1281, latest change BGBl. I 2014, 1928. http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bun-desrecht/pflschg_2012/gesamt.pdf

years. You can either visit a fresh up course – usually for half a day - or learn about the new developments by yourself (learning program).

But either way you have to proof your expertise in an obligatory examination.
For more details, you can have a look at the Pflanzenschutz-Sachkundeverordnung 2013³.

For the licence card you have to pay 40 Euro once and every three years you have to pay for freshening up your knowledge. The fee for the training certificate is about 20 Euro depending on the Chamber of Agriculture in charge.⁴ In Germany we have got seven Chambers of Agriculture.

If you do not have a professional training as a farmer, the costs for a proficiency course and the exam vary between more or less 214 Euro and 343 Euro.⁵

In Germany, as well, the exam has to be paid entirely by those who need the licence.

5. POLAND – SENAT & SEJM

General requirements on the mandatory training in using pesticides are laid down in the Act on chemical means of plant protection (of 8 March 2013). In detail, the requirements are provided by the order of the minister of agriculture (of 8 May 2013). They specify methods of organizing the trainings, professional qualifications that must be met by of those providing the training, programmes of training, etc.

Farmers using pesticides in their agricultural production must complete a training that is composed of two parts: the basic training (14 hours) and a supplementary training (7 hours) designed for those who already completed the basic module. Certificate confirming that a farmer took the training and passed exam is then valid for 5 years.

There are plenty of institutions authorized to conduct such training, they are registered at the regional level by Voivodeship Plant Health and Seed Inspectorates. Usually the training is included in an EU programme supporting development of agricultural sector and rural areas in Poland. As a result most of the trainings are free for farmers. In those rare cases where farmers must pay the fee is insignificant (for example, the cost of a recent 2-day training organized by Świętokrzyska Agriculture Chamber, in Świętokrzyskie voivodeship, was 50 zlotys, i.e. 12 euro).

6. SLOVAKIA - NÁRODNÁ RADA

In the Slovak Republic the farmer's educational process on the use of pesticides is regulated by the Act No. 405/2011 Coll. on Phytosanitary care, § 32 General conditions, par. 2.

The Agriculture Institute in Nitra, which is a state educational institution of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, is responsible for the education agenda about the use of the

³ Pflanzenschutz-Sachkundeverordnung (PflSchSachkV 2013). Only available in German. BGBl. I 2013, 1953, latest change BGBl. I 2014, 26. http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bundesrecht/pflsch-sachkv_2013/gesamt.pdf

⁴ Landwirtschaftskammer Nordrhein-Westfalen (2015). Pflanzenschutz-Sachkunde – Was ist zu tun? <http://www.landwirtschaftskammer.de/Landwirtschaft/pflanzenschutz/sachkunde/pdf/sachkunde-handzet-tel.pdf>

⁵ Landwirtschaftskammer Niedersachsen (2014). Pflanzenschutz-Sachkundelehrgänge und –Prüfungen. <http://www.lwk-niedersachsen.de/index.cfm/portal/pflanze/nav/220/article/10444.html>

pesticides. Person who can take a place on education about the pesticides use are: a sellers of pesticide, a managers of agricultural enterprises and farmers. These three groups have the obligation to take part of 8 education hour about the use of pesticides.

According to the Act on sustainable use of the pesticides for professional use everyone must go through 8 hour education and pass the exam. The participants, who pass the mandatory exam, are given a certificate. The certificate validity is 10 years. The cost of the 8 hour education and the exam is: for the sellers 70 EUR, for the managers of agricultural enterprises and farmers 53 EUR. The costs of education and exam must be paid entirely by those who are passing exam.

7. SLOVENIA – DRŽAVNI ZBOR

Farmers and other users of plant protection products have to accomplish the training course in the handling of plant protection products and they have to present the training identification card at the occasion of purchasing of plant protection products. This obligation is defined by Act on plant protection products (Uradni list RS, 83/12) and secondary Rules on training in plant protection products (Uradni list RS, 85/13). The system of additional training has been obligatory in the Republic of Slovenia since 2001.

The initial training for farmers/operators lasts 15 hours and the refresher training (on which the validity of training identification card is renewed every five years) lasts 4 hours.

In EU all Member States are obliged to organise the system of additional training in plant protection products for sellers, advisers and users of plant protection products after the Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides has been adopted.

The costs of the training for farmers are as follows:

Fees for initial and refresher PPP training

The fees charged for PPP training shall amount maximum:

- initial training for PPP operator (farmer): 54,00 EUR without value added tax,
- refresher training for PPP operator: 24,00 EUR without value added tax,
- written examination for PPP operator: 15,00 EUR without value added tax.

The fees for training are paid by operators /farmers and are not subsidized.

You will find the description of the systems in the Republic of Slovenia and the legislation on the following web page: http://www.uvhvvr.gov.si/en/zakonodaja_in_dokumenti/plant_protection_products/si_legislation/