



Cultivating agricultural transformation in the EU

Unlocking the potential
for biocontrol innovation
to deliver sustainable
food systems



In her 2023 State of the EU address, Commission President von der Leyen called for a Strategic Dialogue on agriculture.

Our coalition welcomes this engagement and calls for a **focus in the next Commission's work program on unleashing agricultural innovation** as a driver of the transformation to more sustainable food systems, **with a specific point on fostering biocontrol innovation.**

1 February 2024 - 3



What is biocontrol?

According to the latest definition in the negotiations on the EU's Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation:

Biocontrol products are plant protection products that use natural means of biological origin or substances identical to them, such as micro-organisms, semiochemicals, and extracts from plants as defined in Article 3(6) of Regulation (EC) 1107/2009, or invertebrate macro-organisms.

Our Coalition does not endorse this definition. We use it only for convenience and will update this reference as negotiations continue.

How fostering biocontrol innovation serves sustainable food systems

- Plant protection helps ensure that a **maximum amount of the food planted is harvested and hasn't rotted** when it reaches your plate.
- Farmers need a variety of plant protection products, including biocontrol, to **tailor their production to local conditions**.
- Climate change means that farmers are fighting **new pests**.
- More biocontrol products **complement a declining offer of conventional** plant protection products.
- A **diverse range** of plant protection products, including biocontrol, is **critical to combat pest resistance**.
- A variety of plant protection products, including biocontrol, allow farmers to tailor production to **consumer preferences and food industry specifications**

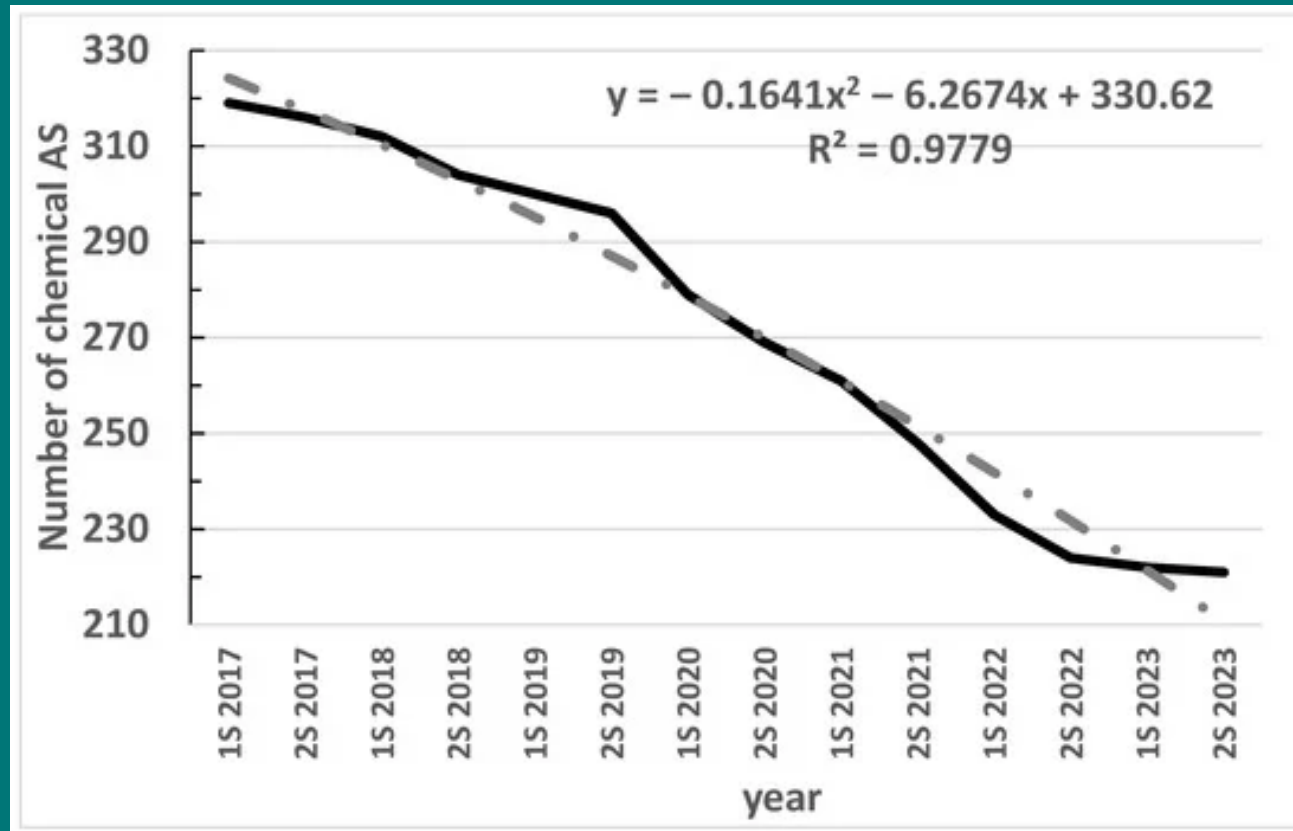


EU regulation needs a mindset shift



to encourage the commercialisation of as many effective biocontrol products in the EU as possible while ensuring health, safety, and environmental protection

The number of chemical plant production substances in Europe is dropping, reducing farmer options



There are 6x more conventional plant protection products in the global pipeline than in Europe

Sources: Marchand, P.A. EU Chemical Plant Protection Products in 2023: Current State and Perspectives. *Agrochemicals* 2023, 2, 106-117. <https://doi.org/10.3390/agrochemicals2010008> and EY Switzerland, What levers should be used for a better EU agriculture system? www.ey.com/en_ch/innovation/what-levers-should-be-used-for-a-better-eu-agriculture-system

Biocontrol products are not filling the gap because the **return on investment in Europe is 30% below the global average**





The time to market for a biocontrol product in Europe takes 7-9 years, compared to 2-3 years in other key global markets

Sources: EY Switzerland, What levers should be used for a better EU agriculture system? www.ey.com/en_ch/innovation/what-levers-should-be-used-for-a-better-eu-agriculture-system and [2022 Final Opinion on Biosolutions of the Fit for Future Platform](#)

Many of our key messages align with what COPA-COGECA said in “The SUR Gap”

Setting near-term targets for increasing the use of biocontrol products makes no sense if the regulatory framework makes them unfeasible 2030 target for the overall sales of biocontrol and low-risk PPPs

- It takes on average 11 years to develop new phytosanitary products
- On average, only 6 to 7 new biocontrol products have been brought to market in the EU every year since 2011
- Since 2017, new biocontrol substances do not compensate for the conventional substances that EU farmers are already losing due to stricter risk assessments for reauthorisation
- Biocontrol products mainly focus on gardening, viticulture, and arboriculture), leaving cereals, arable crops, or horticulture with few options
- Most of the time, biocontrol products need to be used together with conventional PPPs in order to be efficient





**How do we ensure
European farmers have
access to more
biocontrol products?**

Our vision

With a view to supporting the transition to more sustainable food systems, we urgently need an enabling European framework so that EU farmers have access to a wide range of biocontrol products

Key elements of a framework optimised to encourage biocontrol innovation

- A **single authority and timely one-step evaluation**:
 - Pools scarce resources
 - Shortens time-to-market by eliminating a second waiting period in the two-tier registration/authorization process
 - Ensures harmonised interpretations of rules across the EU
 - The feed sector provides a precedent showing this approach is feasible
- **Claims-based efficacy should be evaluated in context** of intended use

Biocontrol Coalition: Together for EU ag innovation

About our coalition

We are a **multistakeholder coalition** advocating for the **European Union to rethink its framework for agriculture and food, particularly for biocontrol**, so that the EU proactively fosters innovation while ensuring safety and health and protecting the environment.

- **Leading Members** are producers of biocontrol solutions who finance the coalition.
- **Supporting Members** include companies from related sectors such as equipment producers, food and beverage companies and others who support the coalition by active participation.
- **Innovation Allies** include farmer associations, agrifood stakeholder associations, environmental NGOs, universities, research organisations, and other actors who support our call for the EU to rethink how to promote innovation in the agrifood chain, including for biocontrol.

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What we do

We advocate for Europe to become a welcoming and enabling environment for biocontrol innovation which contributes to key aspects of food system sustainability such as:

- Farmer livelihoods
- Climate-smart and resilient agriculture
- Regenerative agriculture
- Food security and quality, thus supporting supply chains for food and drink processors and grocery retailers

In addition to systemic change, which will take stakeholder engagement to design and time to execute, **we also support existing efforts to improve the current framework to improve outcomes in the short to mid term.**

Biocontrol Coalition: Together for EU ag innovation

Leading members



How to become a Leading Member

Coalition membership is open to **any company placing biocontrol products on the European market** on the following conditions:

- Contributing resources to fund the coalition according to the agreed size policy
- Engaging actively in the coalition calls, meetings, and ongoing work
- Respecting the principles of engagement and governance that were agreed by the founding members
- Refraining from using the coalition's name to imply endorsement of any position that is outside the scope and mandate of the coalition

How to become a Supporting Member

Coalition membership is open to any **company active in the European market from related sectors** such as equipment producers and food and beverage companies on the following conditions:

- Engaging actively in the coalition calls, meetings, and ongoing work
- Respecting the principles of engagement and governance that were agreed by the founding members
- Refraining from using the coalition's name to imply endorsement of any position that is outside the scope and mandate of the coalition
- Engaging with other Coalition members in good faith

How to become an Innovation Ally

Coalition membership is **open to any farmer association, agrifood stakeholder association, environmental NGO, university, research organisation, or other actor who supports our call for the EU to rethink how to promote innovation in the agrifood chain**, including for biocontrol on the following conditions:

- Engaging actively in the Coalition calls, meetings, and ongoing work as much as possible
- Respecting the principles of engagement and governance that were agreed by the founding members
- Refraining from using the coalition's name to imply endorsement of any position that is outside the scope and mandate of the coalition
- Engaging with other Coalition members in good faith

Our coalition's principles of engagement

- Curiosity instead of judgment
- Respecting diverse views
- Openness to enquiry
- Respecting confidentiality where necessary
- Application of Chatham House Rule where appropriate (no one should be explicitly quoted without consent)
- Consensus building wherever possible
- Pragmatism over ideology (with a spirit of compromise)

Our coalition's governance

- We will always strive for consensus
- Where it is not possible, we will decide by 2/3 majority
- For the moment, a quorum for decision-making requires all members to voice their preference

- The secretariat is empowered to act as the coalition's spokesperson for general inquiries
- For meetings with stakeholders and decision-makers, the secretariat will always be accompanied by at least one member company, selected according to relevant competency and availability

The countdown to the 2024-2029 COM work program has begun

2024



↑
Announced beginning of Commission's Strategic Dialogue on agriculture

↑
Eur. Parliament elections & announcement of Council's 5-year strategic agenda

↑
Announcement of Commission's 5-year work program for 2024-2029





Contact: Marcos Esquina

marcos@prospero.ag

t: +32 2 895 3616

m: +32 468 15 84 41

c/o Prospero & Partners

Lange Winkelhaakstraat 34B

BE-2060 Antwerp, Belgium

www.prospero.ag

cultivate change, harvest value

Together we can secure
the conditions to
promote EU agrifood
innovation!

The Biocontrol Coalition is convened and
managed by Prospero & Partners