

iPLANTA Webinar 3

RNAi based pesticides: Regulation issues

Monday 14th December 2020 at 4.00pm (CET)

Minutes

The webinar was the last in a series of webinars on exogenous applications of RNAi as pesticides and was opened by Bruno Mezzetti, the chair of the iPLANTA COST Action. An introduction into the background of the presentations focussing on current developments was given by Antje Dietz-Pfeilstetter, the chair of the session. The first speaker was Mike Mendelsohn (US-EPA) who resumed the specific issues of RNAi pesticides identified in the recently published OECD report on considerations for the environmental risk assessment of the application of sprayed or externally applied dsRNA-based pesticides. This talk on biosafety was a good introduction to issues relevant for regulation. Overviews on the regulatory approaches of RNAi products in the EU and in the USA were then presented by Achim Gathmann (BVL, Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety) and by Mike Mendelsohn (US-EPA), respectively. Two presentations were given by industry representatives from Bayer CropScience (Greg Watson) and from GreenLight Biosciences (Laurent Mézin), who showed their perspectives on the regulation of RNAi based pesticidal products. Each talk was followed by a brief discussion based on written questions submitted in a chat. The final discussion centered around regulatory issues in the EU, e.g. whether RNAi based pesticides, which are expected to be subject to the data requirements of chemical pesticides, might eventually fall into a special lower-risk category and might be used in organic farming. It was stressed that EU pesticide panels and most member states are currently not dealing with regulatory issues related to RNAi and that among European pesticide regulators there seems to be limited awareness of this technology. The webinar was closed after 2,5 hours with concluding comments from Jeremy Sweet, iPLANTA's vice chair.

The video of the meeting, the presentations and the report can be found at the following links:

<https://www.iplantawebinars.com/event/5fbea30d64f9a93dad0728a>

<https://iplanta.univpm.it/node/81>