

ACTIVITIES AND THE ROLE OF THE HUNGARIAN PLANT PROTECTION CHAMBER

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Abstract

Hungarian Chamber of Professionals and Doctors of Plant Protection is one of the professional chambers in Hungary, operates based on the principles of self-governing, as a public body of the plant protection engineers and plant doctors in Hungary. The chamber organises and manages some public functions related to plant protection engineering activities. „Safe food to the table. From the farm to the fork”- is the motto of the chamber. Food safety of the agricultural products that get to the markets as well as plant health are extremely important all over the world, guaranteed by highly qualified professionals of plant protection. Food safety starts at the soil, the plants or products from plants, therefore the priority role of plant protection and plant health is essential.

After the assembly delegation on 17 of April 2013 the chamber began its operation this year with a new approach. We began to create a nation-wide plant protection forecasting system which is essential in the founding of an integrated pest protection. Our goal to establish and operate this system under the organisation and with the professional knowledge of the chamber. We follow the plant protection education with great attention. It is necessary to ensure the highest quality plant protection education. Food safety can only be realised with a contribution of excellently qualified experts. We are going to take initiative steps for the new excellent higher plant protection education system. We also would like to obtain the exclusive eligibility of non-school-based basic plant protection education for producers and other partners (training of 80 hours with a final exam). Our chamber has close cooperation with the Hungarian National Chamber of Agriculture in relevant questions, within the frame of an official agreement which was signed by the two chamber presidents on 21 of Sept. We plan to take initiatives for the orderly use of plant production products without abuses. On 13 of November the chamber's yearly conference: The Plant Doctor's Day will be organized in the Hungarian Parliament building.

Key words: Plant Protection, Doctor of Plant, chamber, food safety, plant protection forecast, plant protection education.

INTRODUCTION

In Hungary, chambers as public bodies have serious importance in the organizing and managing some public functions related to several professions. There are two main economic chambers in Hungary (the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the Hungarian National chamber of Agriculture), and there are several professional chambers.

Hungarian Chamber of Professionals and Doctors of Plant Protection is one of the professional chambers operates based on the principles of self-governing, as a public body of the plant protection engineers and plant doctors in Hungary. This chamber organises and manages some public functions related to plant protection engineering activities. The Chamber

was founded by the Act No LXXXIV (84) of 2000 concerning the Hungarian Chamber of Professionals and Doctors of Plant Protection.

FOOD SAFETY

Soil and the agricultural products originated from soil are of extremely great value. In our geographical region, agriculture is a strategic sector of the liveability and competitiveness of rural life. It is the key of the retaining power of the rural country. Food safety of the agricultural products that get to the markets of Hungary and the European Union as well as plant health are extremely important (Tarcali, 2013).

Food safety becomes more and more important all over the world, and highly qualified professionals of plant protection can only guarantee that. Food safety starts at the soil, the plants or products from plants, therefore the priority role of plant protection is essential. Our Motto is: „Safe food to the table. From the farm to the fork”.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HUNGARIAN CHAMBER OF PROFESSIONALS AND DOCTORS OF PLANT PROTECTION

What is the place and role of the Chamber in developing a modern, integrated approach, a consumer and environmentally friendly plant protection and plant health system in Hungary?

General tasks of the Chamber

The Chamber supports the professional faculty so that it can contribute to a high quality management of agricultural production, and the development of plant health culture in Hungary. Actively participates in the preservation of food safety and plant health safety in Hungary.

Membership of the Chamber

Professionals of higher plant protection qualification are the members. They are professionals of plant protection or doctors of plant protection with one of the next university degrees:

- Doctor of Plant Protection MSc (basic university education),
- Professional of Plant Protection (2-year post-gradual education),
- Professionals specialized in plant protection in agricultural engineering, in horticultural engineering or in any other engineering educated in agriculture.

Plant protection engineer (it is the old name) = Doctor of Plant Protection (new name according to the Act No XLVI (46.) 2008 on food chain and its official control).

Chamber membership is compulsory to do the following activities:

- in Hungary, only members of the Chamber are entitled to direct the plant protection professional management activity,
- to manage any activities using plant protection products with marketing category I (in Hungary, plant protection products are classified into 3 categories – I., II., III. marketing categories), based on their sales, purchase and use,
- to issue prescription to purchase plant production products with category.

Prescription by the professional of plant protection

In Hungary, end-users are only entitled to purchase plant production products with category I. if they have a prescription. Only members of the Chamber are entitled to issue and sign prescriptions. This is a very important think, and it helps the expert use of plant production products with category I.

Detailed functions of the Chamber

Represents and protects the plant protection faculty authority, the general professional interest of the members, and bodies in plant protection engineering relating issues. In addition it also provides protection against unauthorized activities. Creates the statues and the ethical rules of plant protection engineering as well as disciplinary rules.

Gives opinion on the issue of the pesticide retail distribution license, as well as the plant protection service providers and consulting business license. Keeps a record of plant protection providers and pesticide traders, and continuously submits these data to the food chain supervisor. Proceeds against plant protection service providers, including trade as well, who are operating without entitlement and unprofessionally at the competent authority.

Organises non-school-based vocational training for pesticide user farmers. Promotes acquisition of knowledge required for higher level plant protection: organises mandatory vocational training and keeps record of that. Gives opinion in cooperation with higher education institutes on the standards of requirements relating to plant protection engineer and chartered plant protection engineer training (MSC), as well as higher vocational trainings. Additionally assists the practical training of students.

Makes forecast in order to prevent the emergence of epidemics and gradations, which can utilize locally on behalf of farmers, just as cooperate with the responsible authority for processing such data. Contributes to consultancy activity, and provides, process forecasted basic data.

Cooperates with authorities, which are working in the field of plant and environmental protection. With consultancy and expert work conduces

to sustainable development programmes and action plans development, and assists their implementation. Makes and maintains domestic and foreign professional contacts.

Contributes to the preparation of laws relating to plant protection and to the activity of plant protection engineers. Continues conciliation procedure among the members in case of any professional or ethical issues in dispute relating to professional activities. Cooperates with the competent authority in case of plant protection engineering related issues, and in case of quarantine and epidemic, just as through its members take an active part in the prevention of danger in case of significant agrochemical and biological pollution.

Regularly presents the results of the latest researches and technology. Contributes to the implementation of new pesticides and procedures. In the field of plant protection decides about the submitted applications necessary to expert operation relating to plant protection activity, and issues the expert licenses. Develop and publish, with the involvement of the regional organisations, the professional guideline of the plant protection engineering.

Conducts register about the members of the chamber, which contains the registration number of the members. Keeps a record of plant protection experts, which contains their personal data too, and publish their register annually. Initiates the moral and material recognition of its members, as well as honours donation.

Performs all public functions for which it is responsible by law or these statutes.

ORGANIZATION OF THE HUNGARIAN CHAMBER OF PROFESSIONALS AND DOCTORS OF PLANT PROTECTION

The national organisation of the chamber

The Chamber's main representation based corporate body the assembly delegation, which composed of the 5-5 main delegates with voting rights, elected by the regional organisations assemblies for 4 years, furthermore the members of the Presidency, president of the supervisory board, president of the ethics and disciplinary board, president of the education and training board, and the president of the plant and environment safety board.

The presidency is the operating governing body. The members are the president, vice-president, secretary general and the 5 main members of the Board, who are elected by the assembly delegation with ballot for 4 years.

There are 4 permanent standing boards (Board of Supervision, Board of Ethics and Disciplinary, Board of Education and Training, Board of Plant and Environment Safety) and professional departments.

Regional organizations of the chamber

There are regional organizations in every Hungarian county (19 counties) and in the capital of Hungary, Budapest, totally 20 regional organizations (19 regional organizations in 19 counties and 1 regional organization in Budapest).

CURRENT MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE HUNGARIAN CHAMBER OF PROFESSIONALS AND DOCTORS OF PLANT PROTECTION

It is very important to develop of the obligatory application of IPM in Hungary, with respect to the mandatory provision on integrated pest management as from 1 January 2014 in accordance with Directive 2009/128/EC. It is very important to apply plant production products only in that case when it is absolutely necessary, based on forecasting, targeted in time and space, to decrease the use of plant protection products.

The introduction of "Qualified Farmers/Produce of Integrated Production" trademark– considering the conditions of an already integrated farming certified with a trademark in accordance with the relevant legislation is also very important.

In the opinion of the chamber, it would be very important to introduce the obligatory employment of professionals of plant protection (doctors of plant protection) in Hungary, and our chamber takes the initiative to achieve this goal. It would necessary that the legislation guarantees the obligatory employment of professionals of plant protection or doctors of plant protection within a certain unit of area. It also would be important that plant protection management can be ensured exclusively by a written contract with an expert who has higher plant protection qualification.

The chamber contributes proactively to the preparation and creation of laws relating to plant protection and to the activity of plant protection engineers.

Plant protection forecasting system is essential in IPM. The chamber works on the creation of a nation-wide integrated forecasting system which is essential in the founding of an integrated pest protection. The goal is to establish and operate this system under the organisation and with the professional knowledge of the Plant Protection Chamber.

The chamber follows up for the higher plant protection education in Hungary. If it is necessary we take initiative steps for the most excellent education system. It is necessary to ensure the highest quality plant protection education. Food safety can only be realised with a contribution of excellently qualified experts. Education of professionals of plant protection or doctors of plant protection should be run only in a system that can guarantee the highest professional level, and which is accepted and supported by the Chamber.

The chamber follow up and perform basic plant protection education and trainings. Our goal is to obtain the exclusive eligibility of non-school-based basic plant protection education for producers and other partners (it is a training of 80 hours with a final exam). We would also like to have the exclusive right to organize the trainings for plant protection experts and producers that is compulsory every five years.

The chamber takes initiative steps to take over certain tasks from the governmental administration regarding the plant protection organization and administration.

- According to the relevant legislation the revision of spraying machines is obligatory to introduce from 2016. We try to take steps to develop the technical monitoring network to perform this task (provided that we are able to solve this task, it is a question, but we try to solve it).
- It would be also important to develop a plant protection advisory system for producers (only members of the Chamber should have the right to provide plant protection advisory service).
- We work to develop legal plant protection methods and occasional licences of plant protection products for minor uses. In Hungary, plant protection of minor uses (several vegetables, horse-radish, black elder, strawberry etc.) are very important, but it has several difficulties, there is not adequate good plant protection methods, legal pesticides etc.
- Last but not least, one of the important permanent activities of the chamber is to participate in the war against the *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* (Ragweed). It is a very dangerous, allergen, widespread weed. Its control is obligatory in Hungary. Nationwide informative actions and trainings about ragweed are organized for agricultural producers, civil people, students etc. by our chamber.

COOPERATION WITH AUTHORITIES, PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Cooperation with the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD).

Close cooperation with the National Food Chain Safety Office (NÉBIH) Plant Protection, Soil Conservation and Agro-environment Directorate (NTAI), regional cooperation with the Plant Protection and Soil Conservation Directorates of the County Government Offices – these are the plant protection authorities in Hungary.

Cooperation with universities and agricultural research institutes, with other professional chambers and other professional organisations.

Close cooperation with the Hungarian National Chamber of Agriculture in relevant questions, within the frame of an official agreement.

It is essential that these two important chambers of the Hungarian agriculture cooperate. Recently, the Hungarian Plant Protection Chamber and the Hungarian National Chamber of Agriculture, as two important Chambers of Hungarian agriculture made a strategic cooperation agreement. The formal signing of the document by Balazs Györffy and Dr. Gabor Tarcali, the presidents of the two chambers was on 21 September, the National Agriculture and Food Exhibition took place between a public setting.

CONCLUSIONS

Hungarian Chamber of Professionals and Doctors of Plant protection has an important role in the plant protection management and affairs in Hungary. The Chamber is working uniquely in Hungary in European context, and helps plant engineers and farmers in order to product high quality and safe food. Also, one of the main goals of the Chamber is to create that professional situation which shows an attractive image of the plant doctoral job for young people, so that they can see that it is worth becoming a doctor of plant protection. Because we need new generations of highly qualified professionals and doctors of plant protection.

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