



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
RESEARCH DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
Directorate B : European Research Area: structural aspects
COST



COST Action 850 "Biocontrol Symbioses (Symbiotic Complexes for Biological Control Pests)"

Minutes of the 4th Management Committee Meeting, Botanic Gardens and ICIA,
Tenerife, Spain, June 14th-15th, 2002

The meeting was attended by the following :

Belgium	Josef Coosemans
Bulgaria	Nikola Atanasov
Czech Republic	Jaroslav Weiser
France	Noel Boemare Bernard Blum
Germany	Ralf-Udo Ehlers
Hungary	Andras Fodor Erika Viragh
Ireland	Ann Burnell Christine Griffin Thomae Kakouli-Duarte
Italy	Giovanna Curto Oreste Triggiani
The Netherlands	Frans Zoon (for Rob van Tol)
Norway	Solveig Haukeland Salinas
Poland	Marek Tomalak
Spain	Fernando Garcia del Pino Candido Santiago Alvarez
United Kingdom	Bill Hominick Alex Reid Mike Wilson
COST	Roel Mulder

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chairman of COST 850, Dr Ann Burnell.

2. Approval of the agenda

The draft agenda was unanimously approved.

3. Approval of the minutes of the 3rd Management Committee meeting.

The minutes of the third MC meeting were unanimously approved. There were no matters arising.

4. COST organisation

The Secretary of COST 850, Mr Roel Mulder, reported on various organisational issues regarding COST:

Mr Roel Mulder will finish his term with the Commission in one months time. It is likely that he will be replaced by Mr John Williams.

Switzerland has signed an agreement with the EU for participation in Framework 5, and has applied to join COST 850.

A new COST Action on mushroom technology has been approved, led by Sharma from Belfast.

The financial situation of COST has worsened. The WG1/2 meeting planned for Crete in July had been approved, but it will not be possible to finance any more meetings (for more than 5 persons) for the Action this year or for the first few month of 2003.

Framework 6 starts next year. The work of the COST Secretariat will move from the commission to a separate, smaller organisation. It is expected that all new Actions will have a contract with the Commission. The MC will decide how to allocate the budget for the Action and these decisions will be recorded in the minutes. An institution of one of the member countries will administer the finances for the Action. It will receive funds from the Commission and disburse them in accordance with the decisions of the MC including reimbursement for meetings, STSMs and publications. An overhead fee for administering the finances can be negotiated.

The MC decided that e-nema, which already administers STSMs for the action, will take on the role of administering the finances of COST 850 if the need arises.

5. Reports of Working Groups

WG1 & WG2: Noel Boemare & Andras Fodor reported. The WGs are holding a meeting in Crete (Greece) on Wolbachia in nematodes on 6-7th July 2002, at which future plans by these WGs will also be discussed.

WG3: Three meetings had been held. Ralf Ehlers reported on a meeting, attended by himself, Andrej Bednarek, Holgar Philipsen, and Agnieska Szyk-Basalyga in Poland, to plan the Meeting on extension in mushrooms scheduled for 14-17 June 2003 (see item 9 for details).

A meeting on the potential of nematodes for the control hazelnut weevils (*Balaninus nucum*) was held in Bordeaux in April. It was attended by representatives of nut growers from Spain, France and Turkey; INRA (France) and (at own expence) several nematode producers (Microbio, Koppert France, e-nema France, and Andermatt). Problems, limitations and perspectives were reviewed, and preliminary results were presented. It was felt that the biology of the pest is difficult, and prospects for successful use of nematodes are not great. A programme of co-ordinated research activities was drawn up. This will include field trials in orchards, and results will be available in 2 yrs. A report on the meeting is available from Bernard Blum (agrometrix.blum@bluewin.ch).

Marek Tomalak reported on the meeting on long IJ nematodes held in Debrecen in April. The most striking outcome was the finding that *Steinernema arenarium* may in fact represent 4 species. The Proceedings will be published. Marek Tomalek, Andras Fodor, Arne Peters and Alec Reid are the editors. Marek will e-mail participants to request that camera-ready material be sent to him by July 31st. Roel Mulder will investigate whether funding might be forth-coming to prepare a CD of illustrations for inclusion with the Proceedings.

WG4: The participants at the Tenerife meeting were asked to prepare a half-page abstract of their presentation to be sent to Solveig Haukeland by the end of August.

WG5: Giovanna Curto reported on a meeting held at the University of Milan on 31st May, attended by 80 persons. The attendance included people from the extension service, entomologists and plant parasitic nematologists, as well as experts from COST (Fernando Garcia del Pino, Eustachio Tarasco, Ralf Ehlers, Adriano Ragni and Manuele Ricci).

6. Short-Term Scientific Meetings

Ralf Ehlers reported. One approved mission has yet to take place: that of Markus Riegler (Austria) to Crete (Greece). Two applications have been assessed. As funding is available for only one mission, the MC decided to approve the visit by Oreste Triggiani (Italy) to Zdenek Mracek (Czech Republic) with the purpose of describing new nematode species from Italy. The MC recommended that Danuszka... (Poland) refine her proposal to visit Kiel, and resubmit it.

Ralf will prepare a report on the current contract as soon as the missions of Mario and Oreste are completed and the reports received.

The MC agreed to apply for a new STSM contract.

The MC decided that to make an official request for a prolongation if the money is not spent by the end of the STSM contract period.

Roel Mulder reminded the MC that any changes in the Institute administering the account (e.g. name, Director) or in its bank should be notified to the Commission.

7. Dissemination of information.

Mailing list: Ralf Ehlers will compile a mailing list of people other than MC members and undertook to forward information received from the Chairman to persons on this list.

Web site and newsletter. Ann Burnell had received a quotation from a web design company, ZedWeb, for design (euro 2670 plus domain registration) and updates (euro 30). She will seek a quote from them to make a "dynamic website". Preparation of a newsletter by Rolo Perry (2 issues per annum) was quoted as 500 euro per issue. Rolo could have an issue ready by the end of November. Ann Burnell will send Rolo the MC mailing list and the full COST mailing list will be sent when it has been compiled.

Some commercial companies have already agreed in principle to sponsor the website. It was agreed that Ann Burnell and Bernard Blum will prepare a more detailed proposal (web site content, target audience etc) to present to the companies in order to secure sponsorship of website and newsletter. The proposal will be prepared by the end of July. Bernard Blum will send to Ann Burnell an outline of what should be included in the document. Nematode distributors could be asked for a smaller contribution (e.g. 100 euro) in return for being listed on the site. The MC decided to appoint a Website Steering Committee consisting of Ann Burnell, Bernard Blum and the five WG leaders.

Brochure: It was agreed that Solveig Haukeland take over responsibility for the preparation of the COST 850 promotional brochure from Ann Burnell.

Quality control book: Ann Burnell reported that she had been told by Jurg Grunder that this book is nearly ready to go to the printers. The MC strongly urged Jurg to finish the preparation of the publication by the end of July, and Ann Burnell undertook to convey this recommendation to him.

8. Date of next MC meeting.

It was agreed to hold the next MC meeting in conjunction with the IOBC meeting scheduled for 24-28th May 2003 at Salzau (Germany).

It was agreed that, if budgetary constraints required it, only one MC member per country would be reimbursed. It would be up to each country to decide on the delegate.

9. Proposals for future WG meetings

Nematodes in Mushroom Cultivation (WG3): This meeting has already been approved by the MC. Ralf Ehlers provided further details. The meeting is scheduled for 14-17th June at Robof Experimental Station, 90 km from Warsaw, Poland. The schedule for day 1 includes: guidelines on EU regulations in mushrooms; a description of organic mushroom growing; a split session where scientists and production people will each decide what they want to tell or ask the other group; practical sessions on quality control, baiting, etc, and an exhibition of promotional material by companies. Day 2 will include discussion of hygiene, monitoring damage & costs and a visit to a grower. It is planned to have 2 persons from extension from each country, plus experts, a total of at least 25 persons. It was agreed that the new COST Action on mushroom technology be invited to join the meeting, with the possibility that half of the delegates might be reimbursed by that Action.

The MC decided to hold a WG4/WG5 meeting on Biosafety and the Ecological Potential of entomopathogenic nematodes at Salzau in May 2003, in conjunction with the IOBC meeting and MC meeting. The organisers are Ralf Ehlers, Solveig Haukeland, Giovanna Curto and Holgar Philipsen.

The MC agreed that if WG1/WG2 decided at the Crete meeting in July to hold another meeting, that they should be facilitated.

The MC agreed to approve meetings similar to the one held in Italy (see Item 5), where a small number of COST experts attends a meeting of national experts with the purpose of publicising entomopathogenic nematodes.

A proposal was put forward for a WG3 workshop on *in vitro* culturing of nematodes to be held at Raisdorf (Germany) in October 2003. A decision on this meeting will be taken at the May 2003 meeting of the MC. In the mean-time, people interested in attending are invited to contact Ralf Ehlers ehlers@biotec.uni-kiel.de

10. Any other business

EPN culture collection. Bill Hominick reported on the endorsement of EBRCN for Action Plan to establish a European EPN collection. He reported that at the third meeting of the partners involved in the European Biological Resource Centres Network (EBRCN; EC contract QLRI-CT-2000-00221), held in Utrecht on 13-14th May, he introduced the Action Plan of COST 850 to establish a European culture collection of epns. The meeting welcomed and endorsed the Action Plan and its objectives, particularly as epn collections were mentioned in the EBRCN project proposal. An extract of the minutes of that meeting is appended to these minutes.

Regulation of biocontrol agents. Ralf Ehlers reported on activities within the OECD regarding the regulation of biocontrol agents, including nematodes. A workshop of that body will be held in Brussels in November. The MC agreed that it was the expert opinion of COST 850 that the position on safety of nematodes had not changed since the joint COST 819/OECD meeting held in Malente in 1995, and that the Proceedings of that meeting should be sent to the OECD, together with a summary of that meeting and an update on relevant information available since then, including information from the US. A WG4/WG5 meeting will later be held on a similar theme (see item 9 above).

The Chairman Ann Burnell thanked the local organiser Prof Candido Santiago Alvarez for the excellent organisation of the meeting, and Dr Solveig Haukeland for the interesting scientific programme. She warmly thanked Dr Roel Mulder for his invaluable assistance to the Action and wished him well in his future career.

Ann Burnell
Chairman

Roel Mulder
COST Secretariat

Christine Griffin
Vicechair

Appendix

From Minutes of European Biological Resource Centres Network Meeting, Utrecht, 13-14th May 2002:

3.8 Integration of entomopathogenic nematode (epn) Culture Collections (W. Hominick)

Hominick reported that as a result of three COST Actions involving Entomopathogenic Nematodes, there were large numbers of cultures of isolates of epns maintained at many sites in Europe. These represent an important element of European biodiversity, collected at significant cost in time and money, but maintained to different standards. Many isolates are lost due to poor maintenance and there is probably significant duplication of species held. There is also no common access to information on isolates held or their location. At the last COST 850 meeting in January, Hominick proposed an Action Plan to establish a European epn culture collection, which was agreed as follows:

1. Obtain data for collections that exist amongst COST members.
2. Make the ACTION known to EBRCN and seek its endorsement.
3. Use the COST 850 website to make the database available to members.
4. Establish a virtual collection (ie the collection can be dispersed over a number of sites, but it will have a common access point/catalogue).
5. Establish and implement quality management and quality control procedures for the collection.
6. Produce a stable collection, preserved in liquid nitrogen. This may require research to adapt protocols for some species.
7. Work towards meeting appropriate CABRI (Common Access to Biological Resources and Information) standards.
8. Establish a pricing mechanism for supply of isolates. The collection must be sustainable and cannot be "free".
9. The aim is to establish a stable and secure collection, preserved in liquid nitrogen, so requiring minimal maintenance and providing a resource for reference and for future use in biocontrol programmes. The collection may be dispersed over a number of sites, but a central repository should also be established with appropriate duplicate deposits for security purposes.