

COST Action 850 “Biological Symbioses”

Draft Minutes of the 8th Management Committee Meeting, České Budejovice, January 15th, 2005.

The meeting was attended by the following: ANSARI Minshad Ali (B), ATANASOV Nikola Dimitrov (BG), BLUM Bernard J. (CH), BOEMARE Noel (F), BURNELL Ann (IRL), COOSEMANS Jozef (B), CURTO Giovanna (I), DILLON Aoife (IRL), EHLERS Ralf-Udo (D), ENRIGHT Roy (IRL), GARCIA DEL PINO Fernando (E), GLAZER Itamar (IL), GRADINAROV Denis (BG), HAUKELAND-SALINAS Solveig (N), HYRSL Pavel (CZ), LIU Qizhi (D), MRACEK Zdenek (CZ), PUZA Vladimir (CZ), REID Alex (GB), ROLSTON Alec (IRL), ROPEK Dariusz (PL), SEGAL Daniel (IL), STURHAN Dieter (D), TARASCO Eustachio (IT), TOMALAK Marek (PL), TRIGGIANI Oreste (I), VERDUN Cyrille (GB), WEISTER Varoslav (CZ), WILSON Michael (GB), ZEC-VOJINOVIC Melita (FIN)

1 Opening of the meeting

The Chairman of COST 850, Dr Ralf Ehlers, opened the meeting and thanked Zdenek Mracek for hosting the MC and workshop

2 Approval of the agenda

The draft agenda was unanimously approved.

3 Approval of the minutes of the 6th Management Committee meeting

The minutes of the 7th MC meeting at Helsinki, Finland were unanimously approved. There were no matters arising.

4 Report by COST Secretary Bouktje Stol

- The maximum duration of STSMs has been extended to 3 months. The maximum budget for 3 months is €2,500. Individual STSMs are still financed from a central budget, while the cost of training schools is deducted from the actions budget. Training schools should be less than one week of duration.
- Participants from neighbouring countries in COST actions can be reimbursed from a special budget. Neighbouring countries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Mediterranean countries that have already established R&D agreements with the EU (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Palestine Authority, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon). The exact procedure for reimbursement has yet to be determined.
- As of this year onwards, a maximum of €2,000 from the action budget can be spent on the website.
- Financial matters:
 - The majority of meetings in 2004 have been paid. Average cost of reimbursement for meetings was ca 670 Euro per person per meeting. Meeting in 2004 cost 94,933 Euro (Merelbeke (€5,394), Helsinki (€38,123), Aberdeen (€1,544), Wellesbourne (€20,634) and Kiel (€18,425). Associated organising costs accounted from 10,813 Euro.
 - The budget for 2004 was 85,000 Euro and this was reduced to 68,000 Euro in 2005. The 2005 budget is based on the 12 million Euro allocated to the actions. COST has requested 14 million but as yet this requested has not been granted. A successful outcome could result in a further 10,000 Euro allocation to COST 850 (total 78,000 Euro).
 - New reimbursement procedures allow a fixed amount for local transport for which receipts do not need to be produced (40 Euro). Once a candidate has registered with the ESF database repeated submission of financial details would not be required. Claimants may only submit expenses for the day before and after a meeting, unless a statement from a travel agent is provide confirming that a longer stay was required to avail of a cheaper flight.
- The COST Midterm review will take place in June. This will decide both the budget and future of COST. Participants at meetings will be asked to fill out satisfaction forms on how COST is functioning.

5 COST 850 Website and publications

- Ralph Ehlers reported that Jürg Grunder would publish the Quality Control book soon. The book is paid for by several Institutions within Switzerland, including Jürg Grunder's. Bouktje Stol reported that COST is now in a position to support the publication of print copies. Information is available on the cost website (www.cost.cordis.lu/scr/cost_office_documents.cfm).
- Ralf Ehlers emphasised the value of the website for internal communication as well as externally. Application forms for meetings and a number of PowerPoint presentations are also now available to download from the COST 850 website
- Information relating to the use of EPNs against mushroom pests, grubs and slugs will soon be complete and available on the Internet.
- Information on Black Vine Weevil control has not been compiled due to the departure of Rob Van Tol. Information from Willem on sciarids control is yet to be compiled.
- Not all countries have provided country details for inclusion on the website (www.cost850.ch). Information from Belgium, Poland and Spain is still required, while the content from Hungary, Italy and Switzerland may need to be improved. Links are not yet in place for Denmark, Finland, France, Norway, Portugal and Sweden
- Bernard Blum reported that maintenance of the website had cost more than originally thought. He anticipated that costs would not exceed €1,000, but suggested that running costs this year should come from the COST budget. This was agreed by all.
- Solveig Sallinas suggested that the reports from the STSMs should be posted on the website. This was agreed by all.

6 Short-term Scientific Missions

Solveig Salinas, in charge of STSMs, reported on three submissions that had been submitted electronically to solveig.haukeland@planteforsk.no

- Dorota Tumialis, Warsaw Agricultural University is to be hosted by Koppert Biological System in the Netherlands to work on the production of *H. megidis* in liquid culture
- Zoe Mulroy Hehir, NUI Maynooth is to be hosted by Dr. John Jones, Scottish Crop Research Institute (SCRI), to generate Expressed Sequence Tags (ESTs) from a cDNA library prepared from *Steinernema carpocapsae* DJs during the early stages of insect infection.
- Sibylle Schroer, CAU Kiel is to be hosted by Denis Wright, Imperial College, UK to conduct research on entomopathogenic nematode formulation and application technology against foliar pests

All three STSMs were unanimously approved

7 Reports and future activity for WGs

Three very successful meetings had taken place:

- WG3 "EPN in mushrooms" – training of extension workers for mushroom fly at HRI, Wellesborne, UK – held on October 27, 2004. Roma Gwynn and David Chandler organised the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to promote increased use of EPN for sustainable control of mushroom sciarids, to facilitate the transfer of technology to agriculture practice, to exchange experiences and to build a network. Representatives from the UK, Ireland and France were in attendance, with 35 participants. Although the meeting was a success, Ralf highlighted the need to provide translators at the extension workers level, as language problems do arise. Itamar Gazer suggested that perhaps training workshops could be organised at a national level. Bernard Blum highlighted that training workshops organised on a national level may in some countries have few participants.
- WG3 + WG5 "Risk of EPN use and registration" in Hotel Birke, Kiel, Germany November 5-7, 2004. The meeting was organised by Ralf Ehlers. Feedback from the meeting was that indigenous nematodes should not be regulated, but persistence data should be made available for exotic nematodes. The only hazard related with EPN is the effect on non-target organisms and this should be tested for using pot experiments, rather than in Petri dishes. To ensure security during production inline with OECD guidelines, if the bacteria survives >38°C, then toxicological investigation on mammals is requested. Generally, the risks related with EPN were considered to be remote compared to other introduced biological control agents. Ralf Ehlers suggested that a summary of the results might be posted on the web, with recommendations that are clear and easily understood by regulatory bodies.

- Mike Wilson reported on the meeting on Slug Control, which was held on October 18, 2004 in Aberdeen. Details are available on the website (http://abdn.ac.uk/organic/organic_21_2.php) Ralf Ehlers presented alternative sites which contain useful information on slug control <http://www.cf.ac.uk/biosi/research/biodiversity/staff/wocs2.html>, <http://www.slugcontrol.rothamsted.ac.uk>.

Future meetings

- WG1 + WG2 “Nematode-bacterium symbioses” – to be held in Crete from the 2nd to the 3rd of July 2005. A tentative programme was presented. The meeting is being organised by Kostas Bourtzis together with David Clarke. The meeting will be classified as a workshop in order to allow a greater number of participants.
- WG3 “Novel uses of EPN” – to be held in Bari on the 11th of June 2005, before the IOBC/WPRS Working Group “Insect Pathogens and Insect Parasitic Nematodes”, Locorotondo, Bari, Italy. The meeting is being organised by Oreste Triggiani and planned by Marek Tomalak. A tentative programme was discussed, with Zdenek Mracek chairing a session on Ecology and Zoogeographics, Itamar Glazer chairing a session on Genetics and Genomics, Marek Tomalak chairing a session on Forests and Fruit Orchards and Solveig Salinas chairing a session on Horticultural Pests. Ralf Ehlers reminded organisers that he needs the programme by February. The MCM will take place in Bari on Friday 10th June from 4 to 7 p.m.
- WG3 “Thrips” – to be held in Hanover, Germany from the 16th to 17th of April. Lemma Ebssa will organise the meeting. Ralf Ehlers reminded organisers that he needs the programme, a budget, the list of participants and the list for travel COST support and letters of invitation in advance of the proposed meeting. A tentative list of speakers was presented. Ralf Ehlers suggested that it might be beneficial to invite Judy Mason from the USA due her extensive work with *Thripinema*.
- WG1 + WG2 “Genome evolution in EPN”. Ann Burnell reported the European Society of Nematology meeting will be held in Bulgaria in 2006 and it was agreed that COST should participate. Ann Burnell highlighted the fact that the outcome of the workshop in Bari will produce information on sequencing that may impact on the likelihood of this action group applying for an extension of the project. Ann Burnell suggested that at the next MCM in Bari it should be decided when to hold the Genome evolution workshop.
- WG3 “EPN and oil seed rape” – Holger Philipsen and Melita Zec-Vojinovic will organise a meeting in Copenhagen in 2005. No details were presented.

Proposals for future meetings were then considered:

- Nematode-bacterium symbioses - Ralf Ehlers suggested that bioactive molecules can be discussed at the Crete meeting (2 to 3 July, 2005)
- Cold activity - it is unlikely a workshop on this will go ahead this year due to our current financial situation.
- Grubs - Ralf Ehlers plans to organise a meeting on in Kiel with 5 participants, however the details are yet to be decided.

8 AOB

The MC was unanimous in agreeing to record its appreciation to Dr. B. Stol for her excellent administration of COST 850. The committee also recorded its appreciation of the changes made by Dr. Stol and the COST office in the organisation of the COST programme, in particular the reduction in the time required to gain permission to hold meetings and workshops; improvements to the STSM programme; the extension of the COST participation to neighbouring countries; reduction to the complexity of the reimbursement forms and the reduction in the reimbursement time.

9 Date of next MC Meeting

Friday 10th June (4 p.m.), Locorotondo, Bari, Italy (see 7).

Minutes by Aoife Dillon and additions by secretary, chairman and STSM organiser