

COST Action 850 “Biological Symbioses “

Minutes of the 9th Management Committee Meeting, Locorotondo, Bari, Italy, June 11th, 2005.

The meeting was attended by the following participants: Ansari (B), Atanasov (BG), Boemare (F), Burnell (IRL), Coosemans (BE), Ehlers (DE), Ester (NL), Glazer (ISR), Haukeland (NO), Morton (ES), Mracek (CR), Tomalak (POL), Curto (IT), Wilson (UK), Ebbsa (DE), Ennis (IRL), Verdun (F), Prins (NL), Triggiani (I), Kuske (CH), van Tol (NL), Gress (USA) and Stock (USA).

1 Opening of the meeting

The chairman of COST 850, Dr Ralf Ehlers, opened the meeting and thanked Prof. Triggiani, Università degli studi di Bari, Italy, for hosting the MC and the workshop on “ Novel use EPN “. He specially welcomed Mr. Peeters, from the European Cost Office at Brussels.

2 Approval of the agenda

The draft agenda was unanimously approved. However, an additional point on “ registration of EPN’s “ was added.

3 Approval of the minutes of the 8th Management Committee Meeting

The minutes of the 8th MC Meeting at Ceske Budejovice, January 2005, were unanimously approved.

4 COST 850 website and publications

The book on “Quality Control” will be available in July 2005. The manuscript is ready and will be printed by Agroscope, Switzerland, which will distribute the publication as well.

Website: Updates on meetings, contributions during meetings, organizations, events are available on the website. It was decided to spend 2.000 € for the handling of our website out of the COST budget in 2006 as no funds are available in 2005. Jürg Grunder (CH) or Bernard Blum will be asked to send an invoice to be transferred to the COST office.

The value for international and external communication was emphasized. Thus the COST850 webpage should be continued, even after the end of the COST 850 action in 2006. IBMA might be able to provide the cost of the webpage.

5 STSM

No money is left for STSM for the year 2005, however, STSM should go on as a useful tool. Probably next year new possibilities will be created under ESF, separately from COST. Information will be available on the COST website.

Following STSMs are approved:

1. Benedikt Kurtz, Ch.-Albrechts University, Institute of Zoology, Kiel (DE)

Title: Preventive and curative management of the maize - pest insect *Diabrotica v. virgifera* using entomopathogenic nematodes

Host: Ibolya Zsella, Plant Protection Service

Period: from 23/04/2005 to 23/07/2005 Place: Hodmezovasarhely (HU)

2. Muzezen Mohammed, University of Gent.

Control of Sciarid flies by Entomopathogenic nematodes at temperatures above 30°C

Host: Ralf Ehlers, University of Kiel

Period: from 29/03/2005 to 31/05/2005 Place: Kiel (DE)

3. Zoe Mulroy, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Department of Biology.

To generate c. 5,000 Expressed Sequence Tags (ESTs) from a cDNA library prepared from *Steinernema carpocapsae* DJs during the early stages of insect infection.

Host: John Jones, Scottish Crop Research Institute

Period: from 09/05/2005 to 01/07/2005 Place: Dundee (UK)

4. Stefanos Siozios, University of Ioannina, Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, Agrinio (GR)

Wolbachia ankyrans and their role in host (*Drosophila*) - bacterial interactions

Host: Henk Braig, University of Wales

Period: from 01/08/2005 to 31/10/2005 Place: Bangor (UK)

5. Panagiotis Ioannidis, University of Ioannina, Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, Agrinio (GR)

Identification of cross-species genetic interactions between *Wolbachia* strains and their hosts through computational analysis of gene fusion

Host: Christos Ouzounis, European Bioinformatics Institute

Period: from 01/07/2005 to 31/09/2005 Place: Cambridge (UK)

It was decided to support approximately 3 STSM in 2006 to be able to leave the funds for the organization of the final COST meeting.

6 Reports and future activity for WGs

1. WG3 Meeting Ceske Budejovice: "Natural Occurrence and Evolution"

The meeting in Ceske Budejovice, January 2005, was a very interesting two days meeting on natural occurrence and evolution of EPN, with 35 participants. The contributed papers are available on the COST 850 website.

2. WG3 Meeting Hannover : "Biological Control of Trips"

The meeting took place in Hannover, April 2005, and was attended by 26 participants. A lot of novel information on application of EPN against thrips was supplied. Information (presentations in pdf) on the website.

3. WG1+2 Meeting Crete : "Nematode-Bacterium Symbiosis"

This meeting will be organized by Costas Bourtsis in Crete, July 2-3, 2005. A list of participants, for 25 reimbursed persons is approved.

The program is on the website of COST 850.

4. WG3 Meeting Locorotondo : "Novel use of EPN"

This meeting was before the start of the IOBC meeting, which is actually going on here in Locorotondo, and is very successful, organized by Oreste Triggiani, in combination with the 9th MC Meeting.

5. WG3+4 Meeting : "EPN in oil seed rape"

Oil seed rape is an important topic in the EU, and EPN possess a high potential to control pests in cruciferous crops. Later in the year, it will be clear if budgets are left. No decision was taken at present for the organization of this meeting.

7 End of action 4.3.2006, final report, prolongation and activities for 2006

Based on information from Cost-Brussels the Action comes to an end on March 4th, 2006. For the year 2006 a budget of 65.000 € is foreseen, but about the full budget will be spent during the final meeting with about 80 participants, MC members and activities from all working groups. The chairman reported on the very positive evaluation of the action 850 carried out by Madame Pilar. The decision was taken to ask not for a prolongation for 2007 as the chances are not too good to get it accepted due to the fact that many new Actions are started. Those working on the bacteria of EPNs are requested to join COST Action 862 "Bacterial Toxins", which was applied for by Ralf and was recently accepted.

The final meeting will take place in Salzgau, June 1-3, 2006, organized by the chairman of the 850 Action, Ralf Ehlers.

8 Date for next MC Meeting

The next MC Meeting will take place at the moment of the final meeting, June 1-3, 2006 in Salzgau, Germany.

9 Any other business

The EU decided to cover EPN under microorganisms and as such they would have to go through a registration process following rules of the Directive 91/414/ECC. None of the members of the Action 850 have been consulted to justify this decision. COST 819 and 850 have gathered piles of information on the safety of EPN (summary see safety on website). These have always been made available to the OECD and the EC. It is not understood why EPN should now be registered. This decision was unanimously seen as an exaggeration of risks related with the use of EPN in plant protection. No scientific justification or recommendations about the risks of EPN could be identified that would justify the step of the European authorities to include EPN in the 91/414. The chairman will send a letter to the regulatory EU authorities, explaining the results of Cost Actions on the safety of EPN and ask to return to the earlier rules excluding EPN from Dir. 91/414. This letter will be available on the website. There is no sense to assimilate EPN under micro-organisms. Any participant of the MC Meeting was asked to contact EU parliament members and to send by e-mail to SANCO requests to stop the unacceptable procedure for EPN-registration.

Minutes by Jeff Coosemans with additions of Ralf Ehlers