

Welcoming address

BACKHAUS, G.F.

President of the Federal Biological Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry (BBA), Messeweg 11/12,
D-38104 Braunschweig, Germany

Dear Mr. Liegeois,

dear Dr. Petzold,

dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cordially welcome you in our Federal Biological Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry here at our campus in Braunschweig. I am very pleased that you followed the invitation to participate in SPISE - the first workshop for the inspection of sprayers in Europe. I wish to express my special gratitude to the organisers of this important meeting and also to those organisations which support this meeting, in particular our Federal Ministry for Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture, the European Commission, the German Phytomedical Society and – last not least – the German Engineering Federation, Agricultural Technology.

It is about time, indeed, to come together within an European framework in order to exchange information about the type, manner and extend of current equipment inspections and the manifold national regulations and to discuss all these information with special reference to the future needs for uniform European actions and regulations of high quality as well as the need for harmonisation means.

The Federal Biological Research Centre is one of the organisations in Europe with a long scientific and administrative tradition, history and experience in the field of phytomedicine and plant protection - as well as, of course - of application technologies for plant protection products of all kinds. I would like to give you a short overview about our organisation and its activities.

The Federal Biological Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry is an independent higher federal authority and research institution. It is subordinate to the Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture.

The BBA was founded and established in Berlin more than 100 years ago. The BBA's research in the large field of phytomedicine contributes to sustainable maintenance of the cultivated landscape and people's quality of living.

Nowadays the BBA is established in Braunschweig and in Berlin and has institutes in five additional locations: Kleinmachnow, Bernkastel-Kues, Darmstadt, Dossenheim and Münster.

The BBA has about 500 permanent staff members, including 120 scientists. In addition, there is a varying number of non-permanent positions financed by external sources. The BBA's budget for 2003 amounted to about 40 million Euro.

The BBA consists of one department, 13 institutes, the division for application techniques and a number of central services.

The BBA's tasks are laid down in the German Crop Protection Act, and the Gene Technology Act. In the framework of the authorisation of plant protection products the BBA evaluates their efficacy, phytotoxicity, resistance management and actual benefit. Its statement has to be obtained for product authorisation. The BBA furthermore tests plant protection equipment and keeps an official list of tested plant protection machinery. It develops methods to test crop plant varieties for their potential resistance towards diseases and helps in the general testing of plant varieties. The BBA is also involved in the procedure for the approval of release and marketing of genetically modified plants. Another important field of work consists in regulatory activities regarding plant inspection and plant quarantine within the European Union.

The BBA's administrative tasks are tightly woven with research activities, which gives its decisions a solid basis of up-to-date scientific and technological understanding.

In the framework of the political foci and the research plan which is set out by the Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture, the BBA's research work is aimed at developing methods and techniques to protect plants and plant products, and to avert any dangers which might arise from plant protection measures to the health of man, animal and the natural balance.

The basis for any plant protection is diagnosing the causes of damage to plants. BBA scientists look into the functions of pest and plant disease organisms and diagnose plant diseases. They are working on bio-chemical, molecular-biological and serological methods suited to detect important pests and diseases. The BBA develops methods and strategies for integrated plant protection.

BBA scientists study the effects and fate of plant protection products in cultivated landscape and work on methods of post-registration monitoring of plant protection products. In the context of releasing genetically modified organisms, the BBA does comprehensive research on biological and ecological safety. With its research the BBA contributes to safeguarding a manifold cultural landscape and biological diversity.

Last not least, a bit more specified, the main duties of our Application Technique Division:

According to the German Plant Protection Act, a manufacturer or distributor who places new plant protection equipment on the market has to declare that this equipment meets legal requirements. The Application Technique Division of the BBA examines this declaration and the documentation submitted together with it. The equipment may be tested and is then registered in an official list of plant protection equipment and published in the Federal Gazette. Only such registered equipment may be sold. Manufacturers may also have their equipment tested at the facilities of the Division of Application Techniques on a voluntary basis. The Plant Protection Act also regulates the examination of used equipment.

The Application Techniques Division updates regulations and guidelines for equipment testing and brings them in line with state of the art technology. It is involved in the development of European and international standards for plant protection equipment with regard to environmental protection and carries out research to this end.

The Division of Application Techniques of the BBA is equipped with a modern testing hall, with offices and laboratories, an air-conditioned wind channel and test benches to test oscillation, cross distribution and fans.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I learned that you will also make excursions to another kind of technology that is dominant in the region of Braunschweig, as you will visit the VW factory in Wolfsburg, which is only about 30 km away from here. And indeed the region of Braunschweig is extremely science- and technology oriented, as there is not only a large technical university with round about 30.000 students; here you also find 7 large governmental research organisations that work in the fields of biotechnology, aeronautic and space research, physical technology, agriculture and material science. I am sure, Dr. Ganzelmeier will give you a detailed overview of all these activities.

I wish you every success for your consultations and scientific discussions and I really regret that I will not be able to spend more time with you, as other duties are waiting for me. I also wish you very fruitful and interesting personal contacts and discussions and a close insight into our region.

Thank you for your attention.

G.F. Backhaus