

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

**CEMA and ECPA present new webtool for water protection: STEP-Water**

***The online platform will guide crop protection users in the selection of the best spraying technology***

**Brussels, 28 November 2018.** Crop protection is an important part of crop production, and needs to be implemented with the right products, under strict application rules and with the greatest respect for the environment. This process sees a shared responsibility among the plant protection product (PPP) producers, spray equipment producers, authorities and farmers/contractors. The protection of waters through the minimization of PPP losses to water is especially crucial, and the use of proper equipment as well as the proper handling and use of the equipment are considered important elements to achieve that goal. Many actors, however, have a hard time identifying the features with which a spray equipment must be equipped in order to deliver a higher protection of water.

To respond to this need, **CEMA** (European Machinery Association) and **ECPA** (European Crop Protection Association) developed a new information platform – a webtool – to guide advisers, sprayer dealers, manufacturers and farmers in the process of choosing a new sprayer or updating older sprayers for a certain application or farm/area situation, specifically to minimize the contamination risk of water through Pesticides (PPP). The webtool differentiates the categories of Field- and Bush and Tree Crop Sprayers. It starts from the ‘must have’ technology requirements as required by law, and builds up to additional recommended and highly recommended features that are considered essential for water protection.

This initiative must also be seen in line with the goals of the European TOPPS project, which started as a 3 year Life project in 2005 to reduce losses of PPP to water. TOPPS has developed diagnosis tools and a toolbox of measures to be used to recommend risk reduction through Best Management Practices (BMPs) for all major entry routes of PPP to water. The BMPs are being disseminated through information, presentations, publications and trainings with local partners to farmers, advisers and stakeholders. TOPPS follows a process approach which is now also reflected in the EU legal framework for crop protection, where a additional focus is given to the use phase of PPP by the Directive on Sustainable use of Pesticides (2009/128/EU) and the amendment of the Machinery Directive (2009/127/EC), where environmental aspects related to sprayers are mentioned for the first time and requirements for Pesticide Application Equipment are expressed.

The STEP-water tool and website ([www.step-water.org](http://www.step-water.org)) had their European launch today at the European Parliament, in the course of an event organised by the Agri-Food Chain Coalition (AFCC) which highlighted the efforts the sector is making to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

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**For more information:**

[www.STEP-water.org](http://www.STEP-water.org)

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**CEMA** ([www.cema-agri.org](http://www.cema-agri.org)) is the European association representing the agricultural machinery industry. With 10 national member associations, the CEMA network represents both large multinational companies and numerous European SMEs active in this sector. CEMA includes 4,500 manufacturers of agricultural equipment producing 450 different types of machines, ranging from tractors and combine harvesters to plant protection equipment and precision seed drills, and generating an aggregated annual turnover of more than EUR 26 billion. 135,000 people are directly employed in the sector, with a further 125,000 people working in distribution and maintenance.

**ECPA** ([www.ecpa.eu](http://www.ecpa.eu)) represents the crop protection industry in Europe; innovative and science-based, our solutions keep crops healthy and contribute to providing Europeans with a safe, affordable, healthy, and sustainable food supply. We promote modern farming practices and champion the use of crop protection technology important for the sustainable intensification of agriculture. Our awareness raising and stewardship activities further the safe and sustainable use of pesticides in Europe, encouraging management practices that safeguard harvests, human health, and the environment.