

USE OF PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

Plant protection products (PPPs) are used primarily to protect plants and control undesirable plant matter. Exposure to these substances and their residues can pose health and environmental risks. Directive 2009/128/EC requires national action plans to reduce these risks, including the introduction of alternative methods.

Primarily professional uses

In 2014, the total quantity of PPP active substance (a.s.) sold in Belgium amounted to 7,511 t. Professional¹ and non-professional² users accounted for 95.9% (7,201 t) and 4.1% (310 t) respectively. With 5.6 kg of a.s. sold per hectare of utilised agricultural area (UAA), the level of use of PPPs in Belgium was above the EU-28 average (2.3 kg/ha of UAA³). Total quantities of a.s. sold decreased significantly from 1995 to 2010, from 10,872 t to 5,472 t, increased slightly between 2010 and 2011 (6,663 t), and stabilised overall until 2014. The share of quantities sold to non-professional users has fallen sharply over time: from 29% in 1995 and 2005, it fell between 2.5% and 4.1% over the period 2010 - 2014. This is mainly due to the withdrawal of sodium chlorate from the market and a decrease in sales of iron sulphate.

Fungicides and bactericides recorded the highest sales in 2014

In Belgium as a whole, fungicides and bactericides accounted for the highest sales of a.s. among professional users (43.4% or 3,126 t) in 2014. Mancozeb, primarily used to control blight in potato crops, was the best-selling fungicide (1,100 t). Herbicides, haulm destructors and defoaming agents accounted for 31.7% of sales attributable to professional users (2,281 t), with glyphosate (533 t) being the most widely sold herbicide. In 2014, among non-professional users, the highest sales of a.s. were for herbicides, haulm destructors

and defoaming agents (68.0% or 211 t). Within this group, iron sulphate and glyphosate were the two best-selling a.s. (118 t and 63 t, respectively).

Potatoes require more PPPs than other crops in Wallonia

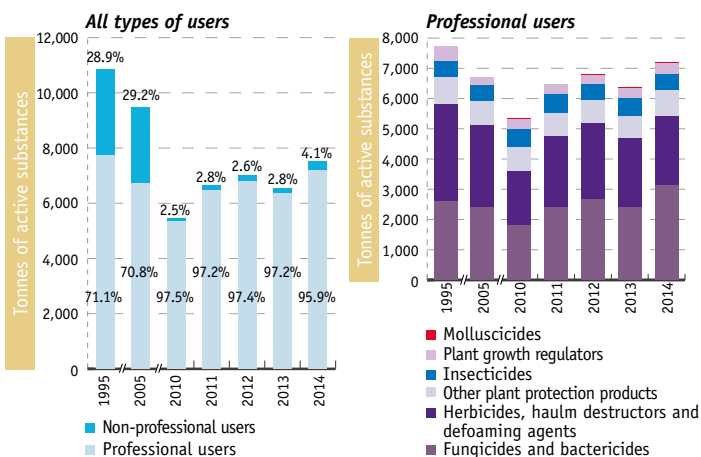
In Wallonia, potatoes had the highest application rate per hectare in 2014 (20.9 kg/ha) among field crops, followed by sugar beets (6.8 kg/ha) and wheat (3.0 kg/ha). Between 2004 and 2014, with the exception of potatoes, application rates per hectare showed a relatively stable trend between 2004 and 2014. The peak observed in 2007 in potato crops may be related to climatic conditions conducive to the development of blight.

Wallonia has adopted a Walloon Pesticide Reduction Programme (Programme wallon de réduction des pesticides - PWRP)

Various measures to reduce the use of PPPs have been taken via the PWRP 2013-2017⁴: the "zéro phyto" (zero PPPs) for public space managers on 01/06/2019, the mandatory application of integrated pest management principles, etc. It is still too early to evaluate the effectiveness of these measures.

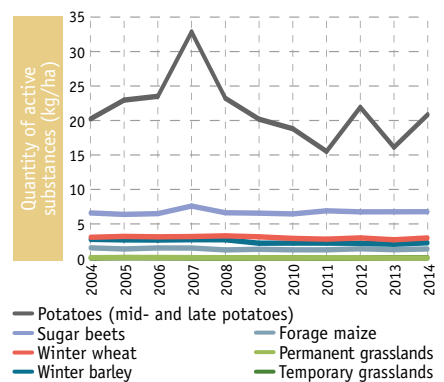
^[1] Farmers, park and gardens contractors, rail network operators, managers of public spaces, etc. | ^[2] Individuals | ^[3] Eurostat, 2016b | ^[4] → TRANSV 3

Fig. AGRI 6-1 Sales of plant protection products in Belgium



SOERW 2017 – Sources: CORDER non-profit association - CRP (2016); SPW - DGO3 - DEMNA & DEE

Fig. AGRI 6-2 Use of plant protection products by the agricultural sector in Wallonia*



* Extrapolation at the Walloon level from data from the farm accountancy data network

SOERW 2017 – Sources: CORDER non-profit association - CRP (2016); SPW - DGO3 - DEMNA & DEE