

15 years of sprayer inspections in the Netherlands: benefits for farmers and society

Jaap van Wenum

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Introduction

- Crop farmer in the Netherlands: potatoes (french fries), cereals, maize, (flower bulbs)
- Spraying approx 600 ha's per year; own farm and contract spraying: mainly grassland and maize
- Policy advisor crop protection at LTO Nederland
- Vice-chair Copa-Cogeca Working Party fytosanitary questions



History of sprayer inspections in NL

- “Mandatory” introduction in 1997
- Farmer initiative
- Responsible use of ppp’s was needed to tackle criticism from regulators and society
 - Spraying licenses
 - sprayer inspections
- Set up of an independent institute responsible for sprayer inspections (SKL)



History of sprayer inspections in NL

Begin period:

- Sprayers tested every two years
- Many old sprayers updated or replaced
- Upgrading quality of spraying equipment

Later on:

- Sprayers tested every three years



Farmer experience

- Sprayer inspection is a valued part of machine maintenance, important aspects:
 - nozzle testing: distribution of chemicals
 - rearing capacity
 - construction and safety aspects
- Testing is done:
 - At acceptable costs (approx 200 euro)
 - In short time (approx 1 hour excluding necessary repairs)
 - at nearby location (machinery dealer)



Farmer benefits

- Up to date equipment in good condition
 - Importance of good chemical distribution features (MRL setting, spraying results)
 - Avoiding environmental risks such as leakage and spray drift
 - Compliant with regulations and certificates (Global Gap etc)





Benefits to society

- Reduction of environmental risks
 - Waterways
 - Ground water
 - Non target plants and insects (bees!)
 - Food safety
- Reduction of risks to residents and bystanders



Future outlook

- New sustainable use directive
 - All spraying equipment to be tested including e.g. in glasshouses
- Increasing demands from buyer's and consumers
- Technical complexity of sprayers increases: GPS, low drift features etc.

Sprayer testing remains essential part of farmer's licence to produce!

