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

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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!