

An overview of the compulsory inspection of sprayers in Belgium

Declercq, J.¹; Huyghebaert, B.²; Nuytens, D.¹

¹ Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research (ILVO), Technology & Food Science Unit, Agricultural Engineering, Burg. Van Gansberghelaan 115, B-9820 Merelbeke, Belgium

² Agricultural Research Centre (CRA-W) – Agricultural Engineering Department, Chée de Namur 146, B-5030 Gembloux, Belgium

In Belgium, the compulsory inspection of sprayers in use was implemented in 1995 in the framework of the reform of the Agriculture Policy as a consequence of the CAP reform and GATT negotiations. Profitability, quality, security and environment were the key points of this reform.

The inspection concerns «all the sprayers that could be used to spray registered agricultural pesticides on the Belgian territory». It concerns mainly field crop and orchards sprayers but also greenhouse sprayers. The inspection is on a three-yearly basis. The average cost for the user is 98€

The inspections are performed by official and mobile teams from the regional authorities (Agricultural Research Centres). The management of the inspection is done by the federal Ministry for Consumer Protection, Public Health and the Environment. There are 6 inspection teams in Belgium which inspect about 24 500 sprayers every 3 years. Between 10 and 14 sprayers are inspected each day by one team of 2 persons.

Based on the analytical principle, the inspection method consists in measuring separately and independently the performances of the different parts of the sprayer to determine possible defects and to establish a precise diagnosis.

A defect leads to a rejection only when its origin is ascribable to the user, when it disturbs the spraying in a significant way and when it has been determined in an indisputable and objective way. The repairs must be done within 4 months, before a second inspection of the sprayer.

At this moment less than 15% of the inspected sprayers are rejected during the first passage. The users repair their sprayer beforehand, taking the notification into account. Technical improvements of the sprayers as well as a positive evolution in people's attitude has been observed.

A balanced and realistic project has been finalized by taking into account the constraints of the different partners.

A compulsory inspection of sprayers using pesticides for agriculture is successfully on the way since 1995 in Belgium.