



Farming from a Belgian perspective

Frank Hardeman, SCK-CEN, Belgium
Anne Nisbet, HPA, UK

Workshop on 'Processes and Tools for Stakeholder Engagement in Radiological Protection, Salamanca, 16-18 November 2005

The Belgian perspective



- The Belgian Farming partner:
the Belgian Nuclear Research Centre SCK-CEN
 - Research Centre
 - Foundation of Public Utility
- A stakeholder group was created composed of:
 - Representatives of the government(s):
 - Mainly at 'Belgian' level, but also Walloon, Flemish,...
 - Radiological experts
 - Non governmental organisations incl. industry

Findings when composing the stakeholder group

- Little or **no experience** with stakeholder panels in this field in Belgium
- Belgian **organisation of State is handicap** (regions, communities, competencies,...)
- **Anxiety** with non radiological experts to participate initially "We don't know anything about this" - but: lots of expertise with food crisis management: BSE, dioxins, fowl plague,.....: they were the real experts
- **Refusal** of **environmental** associations
- A **time consuming** process

But once we were up and running:

- Very open and constructive discussions
- Improving a lot when getting more **concrete** about the 'Strategy data sheets'
(initially: too much explanations, theory...)
- Loss of some participants, but the ones remaining very active
- Enhanced involvement by the Governmental crisis centre, the Food Safety Agency,...
- **In general: feeling of usefulness, relevance, necessity to know each other,...**

Some structural achievements

- 'Farming' raised **interest for the agricultural countermeasures**, previously hardly considered in Belgium
- It contributed to the official creation of '**ECOSOC**', an advisory board giving advice on Economic and Social issues
- It lead to an **informal network** that we can use if ever problems of this nature arise

Farming also helped 'us':

- **Gaining much better insight** in the organisational aspects of decision making and implementation of countermeasures
- **Focussing** more on organisational and less on purely radiological issues
- **Structuring our role** as research organisation that can give expertise to the authorities as well

Remaining difficulties

- **Difficulties to extend** to e.g. drinking water
 - Lack of interest, courage, permission of 'Regional' experts to contribute in a 'Federal' problem (radioactivity)
- Little solutions for the **Waste** issues
- **Can agriculture survive a nuclear crisis in Belgium?**
 Very intensive agriculture, little economic margin, large fractions of industry is no longer Belgian,...
- Is there **time** for sale? We urgently need some more
 (kind of continuation: Euranos CAT1RTD03)



Conclusions for Belgium

- Farming was **a very useful experience**
- It contributed to some '**sustainable changes**'
 - Awareness at many levels
 - Creation of Ecosoc
 - A switch from radiological focus to organisational focus in emergency management
- But: **Continuous effort** is needed to:
 - Keep the relevant stakeholders involved
 - Discuss the themes relevant to the stakeholders (and not only to scientists)
- **MODESTY of EXPERTS**

- Thanks to:
 - The colleagues at SCK-CEN
 - Christian Vandecasteele for starting it up
 - Benny Carlé and Catrinel Turcanu for their efforts in continuing
 - The Federal Agency for Nuclear Control for morally supporting
 - Lionel Sombé for helping with starting it up
 - Christian Vandecasteele for keeping his support after he changed institutes
 - All Belgian stakeholders
- And the European partners for their stimulating input and the interesting exchanges