

Stakeholder involvement in the European FARMING network for the management of contaminated food production systems



Anne Nisbet (HPA-RPD, UK)
Frank Hardeman (SCK.CEN, Belgium)

Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards
Radiation Protection Division
formerly the National Radiological Protection Board

Thanks to the organisers of this workshop for the invitation to present our experiences with the FARMING network as a CASE STUDY. I am here in my capacity as co-ordinator of FARMING but its thanks to my colleagues acknowledged at the end of the talk as well as the stakeholders that the FARMING project has been so successful.

Content of my talk today hopefully provides a good overview of FARMING, and in particular the achievements, difficulties and challenges the network faces in the future.

Frank Hardeman my colleague from SCK is going to speak about the impact of FARMING in Belgium

What is FARMING?



Food and **A**griculture **R**estoration
Management **I**nvolving **N**etworked **G**roups

Thematic network

Co-ordinated by HPA-RPD (NRPB)

November 2000 - October 2004

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FARMING is the ACRONYM for ' Food and Agriculture Restoration Management Involving Networked Groups'

This was an EC FP5 THEMATIC NETWORK of 4 years duration.

I am pleased to say that the network is still very much in existence.

What is involved?



“The setting up a network of stakeholder working groups in 5 Member States, involving more than 50 individual stakeholders, to assist in the development of robust and practicable strategies for restoring and managing contaminated agricultural land and food products in a sustainable way”

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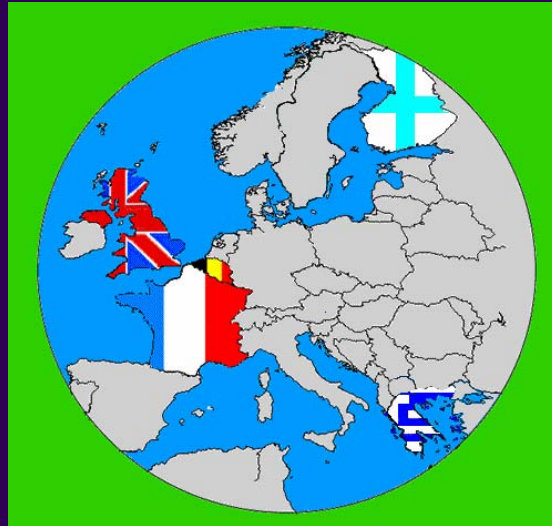


This was the key objective.

Who is involved?



NRPB, UK
STUK, Finland
SCK.CEN, Belgium
INA P-G, France
UOI, Greece



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There were 5 organisations involved in the setting up of the network.

Good spread of countries, production systems, experience of food crises. Only Greece non-nuclear.

Today's presentation



- Aim and approach
 - The stakeholders
 - Achievements
 - Difficulties
 - Future challenges
- } Anne Nisbet
- Belgian perspective
- Frank Hardeman

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Briefly outline the aim and approach adopted.

Indicate who the stakeholders are.

Highlight the main achievements, a few of the difficulties we had to face and what the future challenges are.

Frank will give the Belgian perspective

Aims



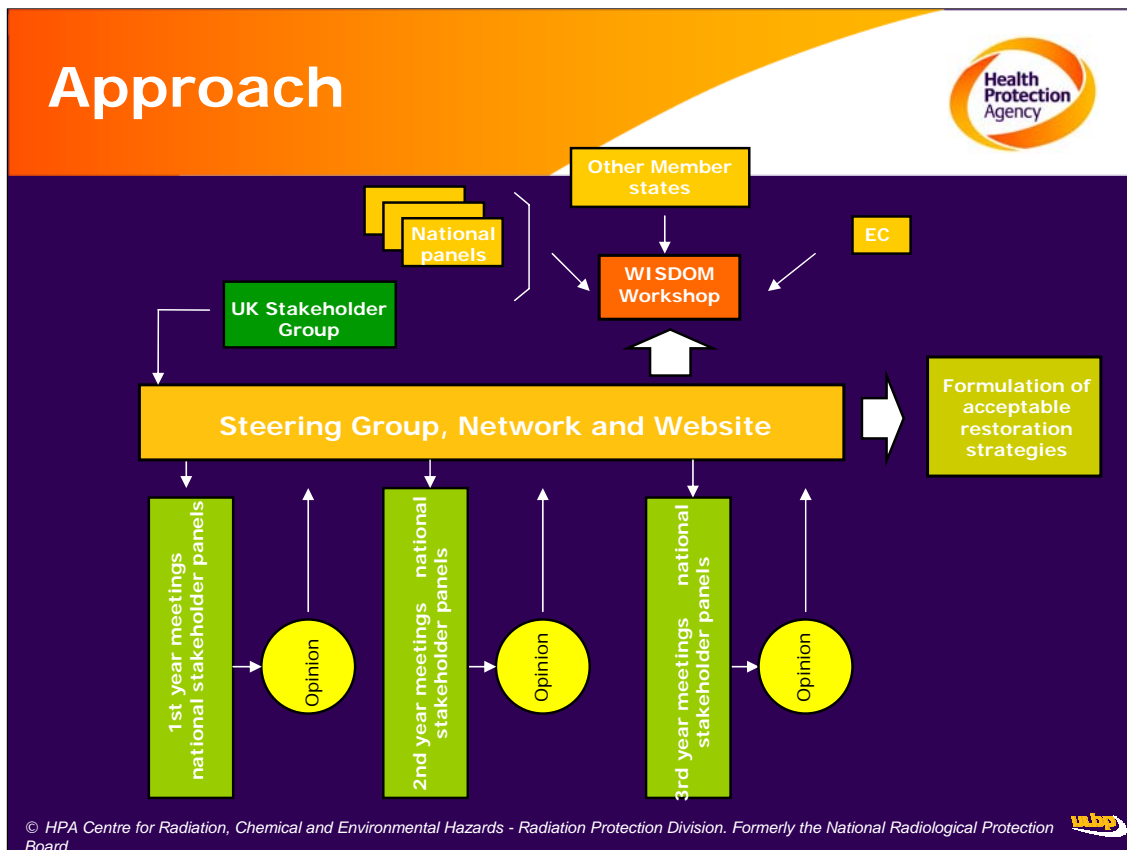
- To establish lines of communication between stakeholders
- To debate and judge practicability of management options
- To extract the implications for national governments, the agriculture and food industries
- To facilitate an exchange of information and expertise between Member States

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Beyond the overall objective of setting up the network are the following aims:

- To establish lines of communication between stakeholders (didn't exist before) – national basis
- To debate and judge practicability of management options (many of which were unfamiliar to stakeholders)
- To extract the implications for govt, agriculture and food industries (different options have different implications in different countries)
- To facilitate an exchange of information and expertise between Member States (website, workshop)



This figure shows the approach that was taken in the FARMING project. Experience gained in the UK from the setting up and operation of the AFCWG was fed into a steering group, which had responsibility for the formation of similar stakeholder groups in other Member States. SG is project partners and EC officer.

The national groups were scheduled to convene annually in the autumn of 2001, 2002 and 2003 for a series of 2 day meetings. Additional meetings were set up on an ad hoc basis as required. Many topics relating to emergency preparedness and management were discussed. All groups however considered the practicability of a wide range of management options systematically described in a series of comprehensive datasheets provided by another related EC project.

Information, expertise and stakeholder opinion from meetings was exchanged with other national groups via the FARMING website which provided the focus for the network. Website frozen at end of 2004 but will be activated at beginning of 2006.

A workshop given the acronym WISDOM took place in the 3rd year of the project to provide a forum for promoting the wider application of stakeholder involvement. The proceedings have recently been published as a special issue of the JER. Work is now being carried out by the FARMING network to develop a generic European handbook to help formulate acceptable restoration strategies in food production systems.

Who are the Stakeholders?



Government

Food Standards
Ministry of Agriculture
Radiological Advisers
Ministry of Social Affairs/Health
Ministry of Trade and Industry
Environment Agency
Agricultural Advisers
Local authority/Mayor

Non Government

Farming Unions
Food Industry
Consumers
Veterinarians
Experts: ecology/forestry/fishing
Retail/Marketing
Water Industry
Waste management
Medical
Greens
Media
Quality of life/families

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Who are the stakeholders?

This slide summarises membership of the network.

On LHS distinguish between GO and NGO

In some cases the **same stakeholders** are represented in each national group. These are shown on RHS in yellow e.g food standards, Min of agriculture, radiological advisers, farming unions, food industry, consumers. **National differences** are apparent also however - those stakeholders in green are not present within each national group e.g local authorities, water and waste industries, greens and media.

Some of the Stakeholders listed contribute > 1 **representative** because of diversity of disciplines covered by some of the larger organisations or due to regional representation

Chairmanship is provided by FSA, Min Ag or Radiological Advisers. In Greece Min of Ag and GAEC co-chair the group.

Achievements



1 FARMING engages a large number of enthusiastic and committed stakeholders

- Membership of more than 100
- Around 20 per national group
- Good communication links established between all stakeholders



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FARMING attracts a large number of enthusiastic and committed stakeholders

At the start of the FARMING project it was anticipated that each stakeholder group would consist of around 10 members. By the end of the first year this target was exceeded. Membership of the network currently stands at more than 100, split approximately equally between national groups (i.e. 20/group)

Members have shown a commitment to the FARMING project with most stakeholders continuing to be involved for the whole duration of the project: all show a real enthusiasm to participate at meetings.

The FARMING network has enabled communication links to be established and maintained between all the relevant stakeholders.

2 FARMING involves a wide diversity of stakeholders and sharing of expertise

- Around 20 disciplines
- Good balance between GO:NGOs
- Exchange of ideas

Preparedness
at home



Disposal



Patrimony



Crisis



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FARMING involves a wide diversity of stakeholders and a sharing of expertise

The FARMING network encompasses a wide diversity of stakeholders from a mix of government (GO) and non-government organisations (NGO), covering around 20 disciplines. The diversity of stakeholders has highlighted a wealth of expertise that is not always represented at the national level. Consequently, there has been useful feedback and exchange of ideas and expertise between members of the network (e.g. better emergency preparedness in the home (Finland), ideas for disposal of waste foodstuffs (UK), patrimonial approach to restoration (France); ideas for countermeasures to be applied in the early phase (Belgium)).

Achievements



- 3 FARMING has provided a forum where a large number of options have been debated under non-crisis conditions
 - Development of national and European handbooks
- 4 FARMING has highlighted important national differences in the practicability and acceptability of countermeasures
 - Cross border issues

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FARMING has provided a forum for the debate about a large number of management options under non-crisis conditions

GOs and NGOs have in many cases been able to reach a consensus about whether a countermeasure is acceptable, only acceptable under specific circumstances or not acceptable at all. Elimination of unsuitable options under non-crisis conditions has been of benefit in the preparation of emergency plans and contingency arrangements at the national level. For example, the UK panel has agreed a subset of options on which a Recovery Handbook for Radiation Incidents has been developed (NRPB, 2004). Work underway to build a generic European handbook.

FARMING has highlighted important national differences in the practicability and acceptability of countermeasure options

The FARMING network has provided a forum for discussion and debate on the practicability and acceptability of countermeasures, both at the national level and internationally. A considerable divergence of opinion between national panels was apparent for many of the options considered. This could be attributed to differences in geomorphology, climate, land management, infrastructure, consumer confidence, socio-political context and culture. Several important cross border issues have also been identified by stakeholders (e.g. the setting of intervention levels, disposal routes for contaminated milk), that merit further consideration in the future.

Achievements



- 5 FARMING has integrated expertise in the management of radioactive and conventional contaminants
 - Dioxins, BSE, FMD, Fowl plague
- 6 The FARMING network is applicable to the management of incidents involving non-nuclear contaminants
 - Infrastructure in place
 - Similar stakeholders, options and strategies



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FARMING has integrated expertise in the management of radioactive and conventional contaminants

Most panels have included stakeholders with experience of managing crises involving other types of contaminants. This has enriched discussions and put the impact of radioactive contaminants in context. In France, stakeholders from the agricultural sector found it helpful to consider the impact that dioxins and BSE had on food supply so as to understand the possible consequences of a nuclear accident, for which they had no first hand experience. Recent experience in Belgium with dioxins, BSE, foot and mouth disease and fowl plague have highlighted practical aspects that had not previously considered but would be directly relevant to an incident involving radioactivity (e.g. consumer attitude, slaughtering capacity, disposal of contaminated milk and meat).

FARMING network is applicable to the management of incidents involving non-nuclear contaminants

The setting up of a network of stakeholder groups with interests in agriculture and the food industry will ensure that an infrastructure is in place that can potentially deal with other types of contamination event. Some of the stakeholders involved would be the same, as would some of the countermeasures and even some of the strategies. The network can therefore be exploited for other purposes in the future.

Achievements



7 FARMING has promoted the setting up of other stakeholder panels for the purposes of emergency management

Commitment from:

- Norway
- Denmark
- Ireland
- Germany



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FARMING has promoted the setting up of other stakeholder panels for the purposes of emergency management

The achievements of the FARMING network promoted at the WISDOM workshop have resulted in a commitment from other member states to establish similar stakeholder groups elsewhere in Europe.

Panels have already been set up in Germany and Norway and plans are in place for a further one to be established in the Republic of Ireland. This has happened without the injection of EC funding. Denmark are keen but as far as I am aware nothing has been taken forward yet. These new panels complement those already active in UK, Finland, Belgium, Greece and France.

Recently, other stakeholder groups have been set up across Europe to address issues relating to the management of contaminated inhabited areas.

Difficulties



- 1 In the initial engagement process
 - Where stakeholder engagement not common
 - Non nuclear countries
 - Environmentalists - a special case
- 2 In developing a common understanding between the diversity of individuals involved

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Difficulties for some national panels to initially persuade stakeholders to participate in FARMING

In Member States, where stakeholder engagement has not yet been widely adopted, there was a reluctance to participate in FARMING (Belgium, France and Greece), although once engaged, the process has been well received by stakeholders. For non-nuclear countries (i.e. Greece) where the threat of contamination is reduced, stakeholders may not see relevance/urgency of the work. In France it was difficult to engage stakeholders from agriculture and civil society, as they have not been involved in nuclear issues in the past.

The development of a common language and understanding between partners in the FARMING project

The differences in disciplines, backgrounds and nationalities represented on the Steering Group led to some initial misunderstandings between partners on the merits or otherwise of the various management options. Over time these have been clarified and as a consequence partners have gained a deeper insight and understanding of other perspectives on managing a nuclear accident. These broader perspectives have been communicated throughout the network to break down national prejudices. However, the problem with documentation and reports being written almost exclusively in English remains.

3 In investing adequate human resources to oversee the efficient functioning of the network

- Ideas
- Meetings
- Papers
- Website
- Workshops
- Useful outputs

Investing adequate human resources to oversee the efficient functioning of the network

The efficient functioning of a network such as FARMING has required a significant investment of human resources. Several layers of co-ordination (at an international and national level) have been necessary to ensure that stakeholders maintain their interest and motivation for the duration of the project and beyond. This has involved:

- presentation of relevant new ideas and topics for discussion
- organisation of stakeholder meetings
- Production of papers and other documents for discussion at meetings
- Updating and maintaining the website to ensure good exchange of information between national panels
- organisation of international workshops to provide stakeholder opportunities for face to face discussions
- useful outputs to demonstrate the value of this type of approach (e.g. handbooks, papers...)

Sustainability and expansion of the network

- Will stakeholder engagement become part of the decision making process in Europe?
- Will there be adequate human and financial resources to co-ordinate European stakeholder networks?

Sustainability and expansion of the network

EC financial support for the FARMING network came to an end in October 2004. Panels from the original 5 Member States continue to meet with some financial support under EC FP6 because of their involvement in developing a generic European Handbook. As already mentioned, another 3 panels have been set up without EC funding.

The sustainability of the network over next few years will depend on whether stakeholder engagement becomes an integral part of the decision-making process in Europe and whether there will be sufficient human and financial resources to co-ordinate the work at an international level.

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The FARMING stakeholders

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