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Update on EcoSyn Project

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Ecosyn is a two-year project supported by some €1mio funding from the European Research Commission with the aim of developing novel, eco-friendly synergists which can be combined with existing insecticides for use against insect pests in agriculture and public health. Coordinated by Italian chemical company Endura SpA's Head of R&D Dr Valerio Borzatta, other members of the European consortium include AgrochemAccess (UK), Ankara Advanced Technologies Investment (Turkey), Babolna Bio (Hungary), Alan Dewar Crop Protection (UK), Rothamsted Research (UK), Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC, Italy) and Bee Research Institute (Vyzkumny Ustav Voelarsky - Czech Republic). The project started on 1st October 2013 and has been marked by excellent cooperation from all consortium members, each of which has a key part to play. Drawing on its expertise in chemical synthesis and years of experience with the well-known synergist piperonyl butoxide (PBO), Endura has so far synthesised in its laboratories over 50 potential new synergists of which 5 of them seems to be quite promising. Rothamsted is guiding this chemical synthesis programme by computer modelling studies which have identified the structures most suited to bind with receptors within the insect and by testing these hypotheses in vitro. Further laboratory trials in vivo against whitefly and aphids are being carried out by UCSC to verify the in vitro findings. The next step will be field trials against agricultural insects which are planned for the end of 2014 and early 2015 and will be organised in UK, Central Europe and Turkey by Agrochem Access and other Ecosyn participants. One important factor to evaluate is the impact of the synergised formulations on bees and other beneficial insects.

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