

EPAGMA UPDATE

August 2005

Peat and Horticulture in Europe: EPAGMA study – data collection

EPAGMA has commissioned a socio-economic impact study from a leading research institute – the Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI) of the University of Wageningen (Netherlands) - on the role of peat in the horticultural industry across the EU. This EPAGMA study will be of key importance in demonstrating the significance and specificity of the sector to EU decision-makers and other stakeholders across Europe.

We would very much appreciate the kind cooperation of national peat and growing media associations in providing EPAGMA and the LEI with data on the peat and horticulture sector in your own country. Dr. Klaas Jan Kramer, the project leader, and his team at LEI will potentially be contacting the associations in the coming weeks to request certain data from your country and/or to give him advice on where to look for data regarding your country. Your help would be highly valued. Once the study is completed, we would be happy to share the section/data on the individual countries with the national associations. The French association CAS has kindly agreed to also sponsor the EPAGMA study, thus getting access to the full results; we would naturally welcome the financial support of other associations as well.

EU Thematic Strategy on Soil Protection

The European Commission has launched an Internet consultation on the forthcoming EU Thematic Strategy on Soil Protection. The consultation addresses a range of issues such as the importance of soil functions, how to address erosion, decline in organic matter, contamination, sealing, compaction, salinisation and landslides. Peat and soil improvers are mentioned a few times in the questionnaire.

EPAGMA has already submitted its reply to the consultation; should you wish to receive a copy of it, please contact the EPAGMA Secretariat. You can also fill in the consultation questionnaire yourself (on behalf of your organisation or as an individual citizen) at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/soil/index.htm>

The closing date for the consultation is 26 September. The final strategy is expected to be published in November and will comprise a soil framework directive, a policy paper and an impact assessment.

Waste from extractive industries – derogation for peat accepted in European Parliament Environment Committee

The European Commission has proposed a Directive on the management of waste from extractive industries, which is now going through the legislative process. The latest news on this issue is that the European Parliament's Environment Committee supported a derogation for peat in its vote on 13 July along the lines of the agreement reached earlier by Member State governments in the Council. The European Parliament's final position in second reading is expected to be adopted in its plenary session on 5-8 September this year.

Next EPAGMA meetings

- The next EPAGMA Executive meeting is scheduled for 15 September in Brussels.
- The next meeting of all the EPAGMA members will take place on 21 September in Brussels, preceded by a dinner on 20 September.