

# ABIM 2020 — the daily blog

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## Daily round-up

The 15<sup>th</sup> ABIM has kicked off in virtual style. An army of avatars – or rather delegates and exhibitors – could be seen queuing outside the entrance.

After the welcome address by **Christoph Brutschin**, Head of Department of Economic, Social and Environmental Affairs, Basel, we moved to the two opening presentations:

**Lucius Tamm** (CEO ABIM AG and FiBL Director) spoke about importance of the biocontrol industry to solve major agricultural challenges.

“The biocontrol industry is needed to facilitate transition of agriculture towards sustainability. New biocontrol products need to be rapidly developed and brought to the market but current registration processes in Europe are slow. However, the urgent need for COVID-9 vaccines shows that if necessary, even strict and complex registration procedures can be accelerated to facilitate rapid approval of much needed innovations. If we succeed in transferring this approach to PPP registration, then the COVID-9 challenge also offers opportunities to Biocontrol.”

Tamm also spoke about the importance of promoting Functional biodiversity, which is a strategy to strengthen pre-existing populations of beneficials.

IBMA Executive Director **Jennifer Lewis** and Member of the ABIM Executive Board spoke about positioning the biocontrol industry in its core role within a sustainable food production chain. She stressed the time is now for biologicals. The build-up to that is worth repeating:

“Pretty depressing start to the conference, I hear you say. But then every change creates opportunity and the opportunity for the bioeconomy and for biocontrol and its role in regenerative agriculture has never been greater, nor has it ever been more urgent... Indeed I would say that as an industry we have the biggest opportunity in our history, the MBA students would say our ‘strategic window’, the climate activists would say an urgent need, the philosophers a moral imperative, and I say to you simply the time for biological is now.’

## **Bernard Blum Award**

**David Cary** (Member of the Executive Board and **Owen Jones** (Chair of Bernard Blum Award judging panel) presented the 2020 Bernard Blum Award from the shortlist of four companies.

For the first time, there were joint winners of the Bernard Blum Award, announced today by the International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA).

The joint winners from a shortlist of four, were:

**Biobest** for Eupeodes System - larvae of hoverfly *Eupeodes corollae* for aphid control

**E-nema** with Dianem – an entomopathogenic nematode *H. bacteriophora* to control larvae of Western Corn Rootworm

When announcing the winners, David Cary, Member of the ABIM Executive Board and former Executive Director of IBMA, said the judging panel had found it difficult to separate the two entries, and so for the first-time joint winners would be awarded.

Congratulations were also passed to **Bio Bee** and **UV Boosting**, who comprised the shortlist and who also made presentations at this morning's session at ABIM.

## **Market update**

**Dr Mark Trimmer** of DunhamTrimmer provided market insights, sharing the results of an informal qualitative survey to see how biological companies have coped in 2020 with the Covid-19 pandemic. While many companies noted the move to teleconferencing was fine with for established relationships, Dr Trimmer said that companies were finding it harder to establish new relationships using this tool. He also added that for some companies the pandemic would be transformative with many looking to maintain some of the new ways of working.

From a market perspective, Dr Trimmer said DunhamTrimmer had estimated the global biocontrol market for 2019 at \$4.5 billion, with North America and Europe being the largest markets. The annual growth rate was a healthy 16% Y-o-Y, with some of that being attributed to Latin America in 2019. It's too early to predict what 2020 will look like, said Dr Trimmer, but he tentatively proposed a lower growth rate for 2020, down by 3-6 percentage points.

M&A – Dr Trimmer is expecting to see more consolidation in the biologicals space. There has been the recent acquisition by Syngenta of Valagro, and today, news appeared of Omnia selling Oro Agri to Rovensa.

After his talk, Dr Trimmer told us that as a result of slowed growth in 2020–2021, the forecasted revenue for 2025 will not be achieved. DunhamTrimmer will revise the forecast revenue following a quantitative study in an updated biocontrol market report to be released in 2021.

## **Panel discussions**

*Update on B. thuringiensis: A valuable biocontrol agent caught in the B. cereus debate*

“Various opinions presented and agreement that all need to work together as Bt is definitely needed to feed the world population and this needs to be done safely!”

**David Cary**, member of ABIM Executive Board

## **Reaction**

“Very interesting ABIM opening section this morning, with a focus on the links between policy (Farm to Fork, F2F) and the changes needed to deliver it: faster market access for biocontrol technologies in Europe. Looking forward to this first ABIM virtual event and the discussions on how to achieve the ambitious goals of the F2F strategy.” Jose Carvalho, Certis USA

## **Walking the exhibition**

"For the first time, my children have been able to 'join' me at a conference. They have enjoyed choosing the clothes for my Avatar, getting a glimpse of Switzerland out of the window, and seeing what I get up to at a typical conference. Some of the benefits of virtual meetings." Shawn Berry, BASF

## **What's up tomorrow**

Interactive training workshop on sustainability / Short presentations on Posters / IBMA regulatory affairs seminar (members only) / Case studies on effective use of biocontrol / Global regulatory harmonization session - European and global focus / IBMA Macrobials, Invertebrate Biocontrol Agents Professional Group Meeting (members only) / Training workshop on Competition Law / Minor uses and Regulatory Issues / IBMA Microbial Biocontrol Agents Professional Group Meeting (IBMA members only) / Training workshop on regulatory issues – and of course, make the most of the Exhibition!

## **What are you looking forward to?**

“At BASF, we’re looking forward to learning more about the progress of new technologies of our industry peers. We in BASF are open to collaborations with start-ups, as well as small and big companies, therefore learning about recent launches, products in their pipelines or their capabilities, is something we are looking forward to.

We are also looking forward to the case studies on effective use of Biocontrol; we strongly believe it is highly important to share success stories and learnings in the use of biocontrol products, so that in a joint effort and in collaboration, all industry players enable a faster

adoption of these technologies by farmers within their organic but also conventional spray programs”

## **News from the industry**

South Africa’s fertilizer and chemicals producer Omnia Holdings will sell its Oro Agri business unit to Rovensa in a deal worth US\$146.9 million.

## **And finally, the thank-you board**

Do you have colleagues who deserve a shout-out?

Here’s where we will put messages from companies to thank people.

Enjoy tomorrow – the second day of the ABIM conference and exhibition.



**Meet the BASF team: Pavillion 2, booth number 2**