Global Report on Validated Alternatives to the Use of Methyl Bromide for Soil Fumigation











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Edited by R. Labrada and L. Fornasari







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PREFACE

Methyl bromide (MeBr) is a fumigant used to control arthropods, nematodes, pathogens and weed seeds in soil in several crops, such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, tobacco, strawberries, ornamentals and other crops.

Some years ago it was discovered that this fumigant is a strong chemical depleting the Earth's ozone layer. Its ozone depletion potential is 0.4, i.e. higher than the admissible threshold of 0.2. In addition, it is also known that bromine released by MeBr is 40 times more aggressive than chlorine in breaking down ozone on a per atom basis.

Governments and international agencies aware of the problem have agreed to establish a programme for phasing out the use of MeBr. Since the fumigant is used in several high-income crops the established phase out gives times to the countries for the development of new alternatives to replace MeBr.

During the last five-seven years some projects and activities have been carried out in several countries which had a high consumption of MeBr as a soil furnigant. The work has been applied field research for the development of new alternatives and demonstrations of those highly effective ones in large plots.

As a result of the above work there are available some published materials on new MeBr alternatives, which describe the feasibility and the disadvantage of each new pest control measure. Some of these publications have come out from several workshops and symposia organized in different countries by UNEP, UNIDO and other organizations.

The main purpose of the present report is to provide information of successfully used alternatives in some countries or regions, where MeBr phase out is going on. Although the report often shows the lack of already validated alternatives, particularly for a region like Africa, the material provides enough elements of the technical and economical success of the use of several alternatives as well as those, which are nearly to be introduced into the agricultural practice.

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