The background features a dark field with several grey gears of varying sizes. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a textured, greyish pattern. A blue shape, resembling a map of Europe, is partially visible at the bottom left.

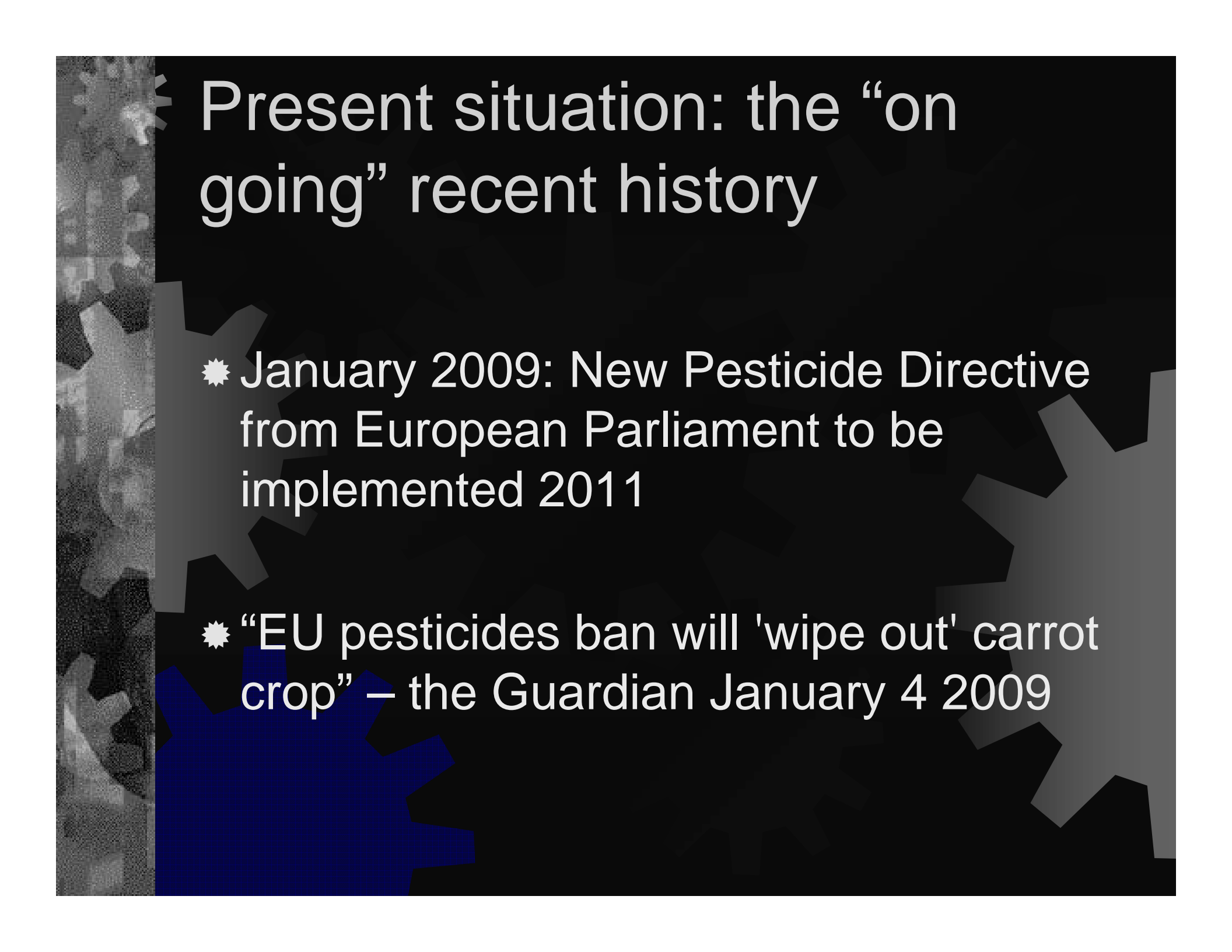
Standardizing Tolerances or Tolerating Standards ? Pesticides Residues in the European Community (1955- 1995)

EURAS Meeting

Cergy Pontoise June 2009

Brigit Ramsingh, University of Toronto

E-mail: brigit.ramsingh@utoronto.ca

The background of the slide is black with several overlapping gears in shades of gray and blue. On the left side, there is a vertical strip showing a portion of the Earth's globe.

Present situation: the “on going” recent history

- ✿ January 2009: New Pesticide Directive from European Parliament to be implemented 2011
- ✿ “EU pesticides ban will 'wipe out' carrot crop” – the Guardian January 4 2009

The background of the slide is black. On the left side, there is a vertical strip showing a grayscale image of a globe. Overlaid on the black background are several large, semi-transparent gears in shades of gray and blue. The gears are of various sizes and are arranged in a way that suggests they are interlocking. The overall aesthetic is technical and industrial.

Food Standards are agonistic

- ✱ “Food standards are agonistic” in that experts use them in strategic arguments and “multiple interests come into conflict in their construction.”


--Patrick Zylberman, “Making Food Safety and Issue: Internationalized Food Politics and French Public Health 1870s to the Present”, *Medical History*, 2004 January 1; 48(1): 1–28.

Outline and Main Approach

- ✦ Overview and brief history of pesticide residues post-WWII;
- ✦ Describe emergence of concept of “tolerance levels” and ADIs Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) as forms of standards
- ✦ Challenges of protecting health versus facilitating trade
- ✦ Focus on two ‘standard-makers’: European Community, World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization

Methodology

- ✦ Drawing upon archival material (reports, correspondence, news articles)
- ✦ Case study approach to highlight inherent issues of standardizing food and agricultural products (pesticide residues) as set by the Codex Alimentarius (FAO/WHO) and the European Community's Scientific Committee for Food, Pesticide Committee

The background of the slide features a dark, textured surface with several interlocking gears of various shades of gray and black. A prominent blue gear is visible in the lower-left quadrant. The overall aesthetic is industrial and technical.

“In many respects the European Community (EC) is a microcosm of Codex.”

- W.H.B. Denner, “Harmonization and Control of Food Additives” *Food Control*, July 1990

- ★ Like Codex the EC embarked upon a programme of establishing common food standards to facilitate trade and protect consumer health throughout the Community.

The background of the slide is black. On the left side, there is a vertical strip showing a grayscale image of a globe. Overlaid on this and the rest of the slide are several large, semi-transparent gear shapes in shades of gray and blue. The title 'Two Main Phases' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font at the top left.

Two Main Phases

- 1) Defining Standards in the form of Tolerances (ADIs to MRLs)
- 2) Harmonization of Tolerances

Defining the problem

- ✦ As early as the mid-1950s, international joint conferences on food additives; concern over pesticides early 1960s
- ✦ Initially, the focus was on harmonizing quality of produce to conform to the *UN/ECE Protocol on Fruits and Veggies* and reduce occurrence of pests like potato wart, fungus,
- ✦ the use of Plant Protection Products (herbicides, insecticides) was thus welcomed and widely used

Defining the Problem (cont'd)

- ✱ But by the early 1960s, these products were becoming a problem in their own right
- ✱ Intentional (food additives) versus Unintentional (pesticide) residues found in food
- ✱ Examples such as dioxin, DDT
- ✱ Problem of “shape shifting” nature of pesticides – change in composition, change in concentration pre versus post harvesting

Defining Tolerance

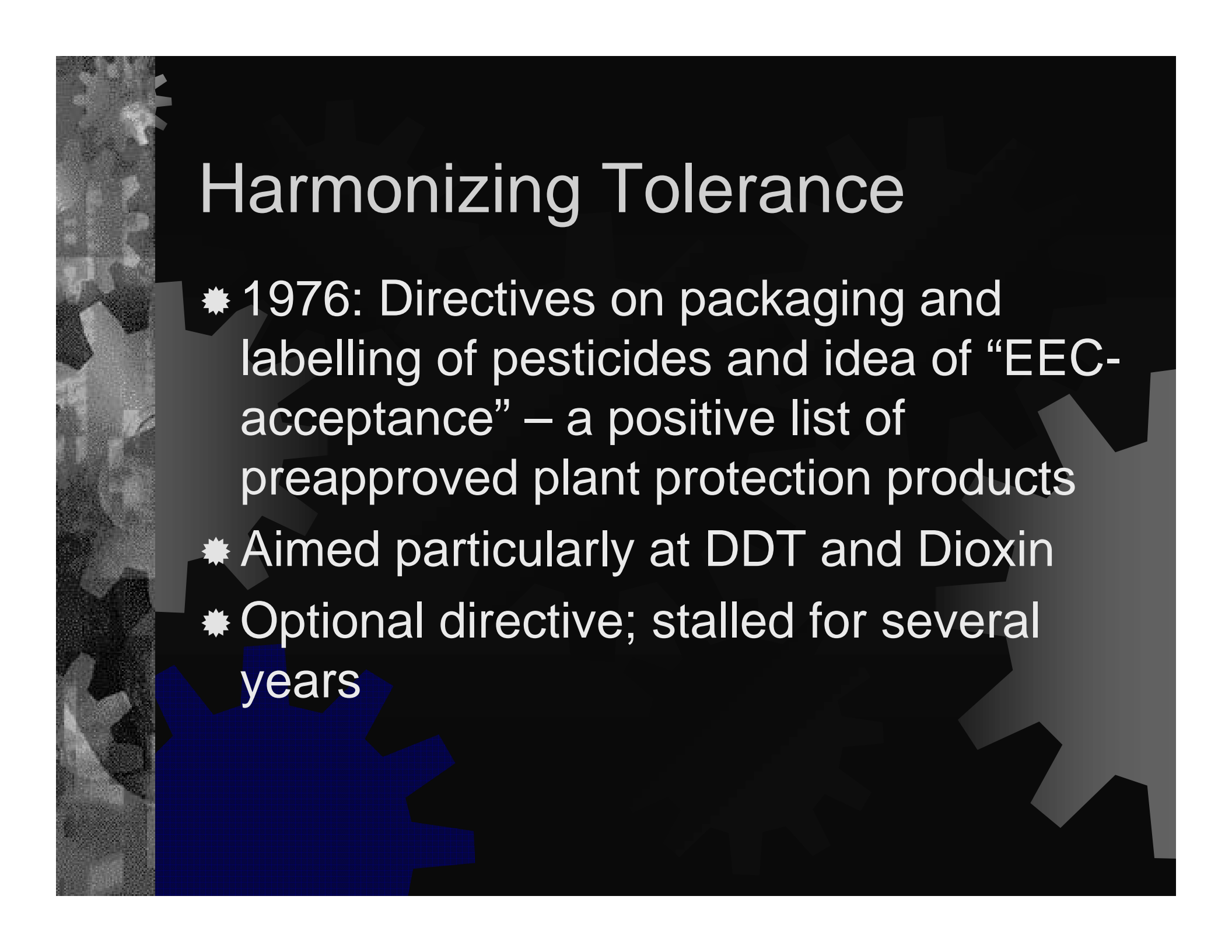
- ✱ Codex pesticide group chaired by the Netherlands with representatives from EEC, ISO, Shell, International Fed of National Pesticide Manufacturers
- ✱ Tolerance: “The concentration that is permitted in and on food.”
- ✱ Distinguish between trade or import tolerance vs. acceptable consumer residue

Types of “Tolerance”

- ✱ Temporary Tolerances: a) when derived from a temporary ADI and b) when derived from an ADI that could be exceeded when the pesticide is applied according to good agricultural practice.
- ✱ Gradual movement from ADI to MRL

Harmonizing Tolerance

- ✱ International collaboration and meetings in 1967 and 1968 between the US, Germany, Belgium and Netherlands, all “seeking to develop routine procedures”
- ✱ European Community: pact of 1969
- ✱ 1971: West Germany banned DDT and thus began rumblings about moving to harmonize use of pesticides or ban

The background of the slide is dark with a pattern of various sized gears in shades of gray and blue. A small gear icon is located in the top left corner.

Harmonizing Tolerance

- ★ 1976: Directives on packaging and labelling of pesticides and idea of “EEC-acceptance” – a positive list of preapproved plant protection products
- ★ Aimed particularly at DDT and Dioxin
- ★ Optional directive; stalled for several years

Seveso Disaster, ICMESA Chemical Plant July 1976

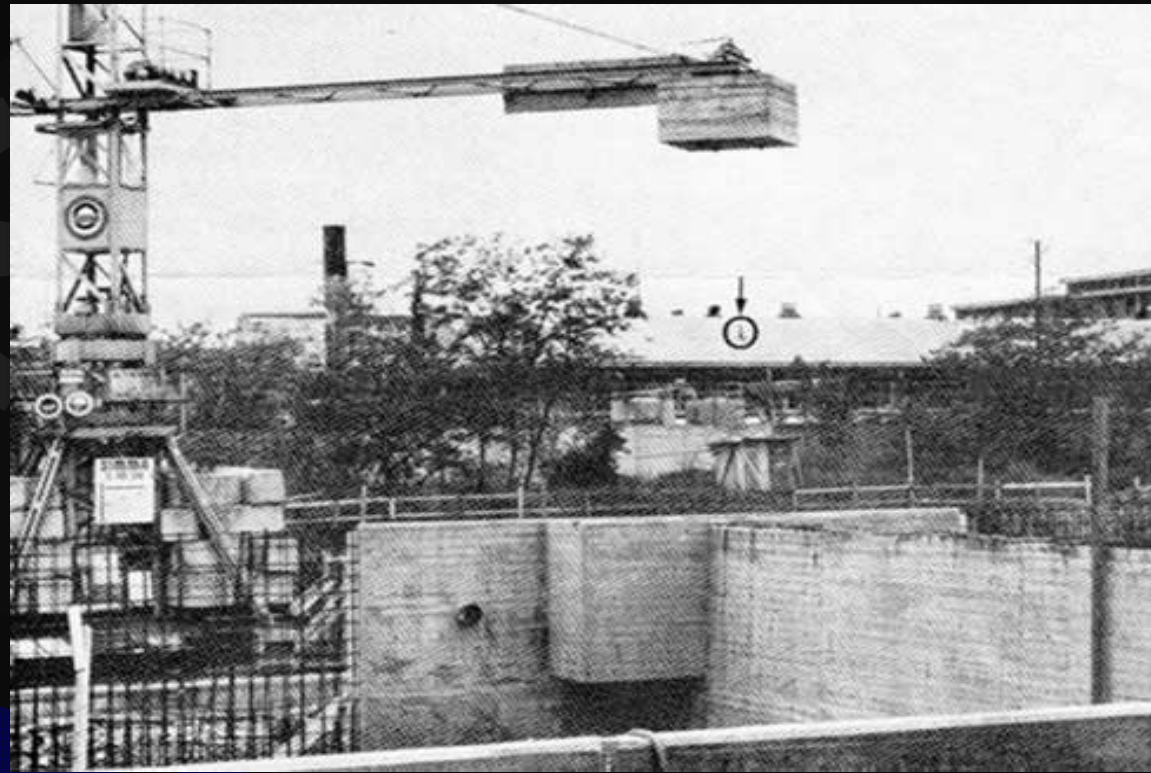


Photo courtesy of: Intl Disaster Institute, London

Seveso Disaster 1976

- ✦ Explosion at Icmesa chemical factory releasing approx. 4 lbs of dioxin into the surrounding area, killing thousands of animals, forcing hundreds from their homes
- ✦ Reports of miscarriages, cysts, chloracne, birth defects

Seveso I & Seveso II Directives

- ✱ Seveso I put forward in 1982 and brought into force in 1985 including pesticides and all other accidents – outlining responsibilities of member states
- ✱ Seveso II emerged in 1996 covering manufacturing of harmful substances, safety measures, prohibitions of use, land-use planning and inspections.

EC Directives 1991, 2005 & 2009

- ★ 1991: Pesticide residue directive and launch of safety review of 1000+ active substances on the market
- ★ 2005: directive on MRLs and simplification of all other pesticide acts
- ★ 2009 directive: controversial move away from simply risk assessment to hazards analysis and calling for outright bans of certain chemicals which did not pass the review commenced in early 1990s