

# Prudent Precaution & Plant Protection Products

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# Prudent Precaution

Le doute n'est pas un état bien agréable,  
mais l'assurance est un état ridicule  
Voltaire 1770

Precautionary Principle should be regarded as a strategy for dealing carefully with uncertainty, i.e. in an alert, reasonable and transparent fashion.



Unfortunately, it doesn't

- tell you what to do
- simplify the process of weighing pros and cons of various policy options



# Prudent Precaution

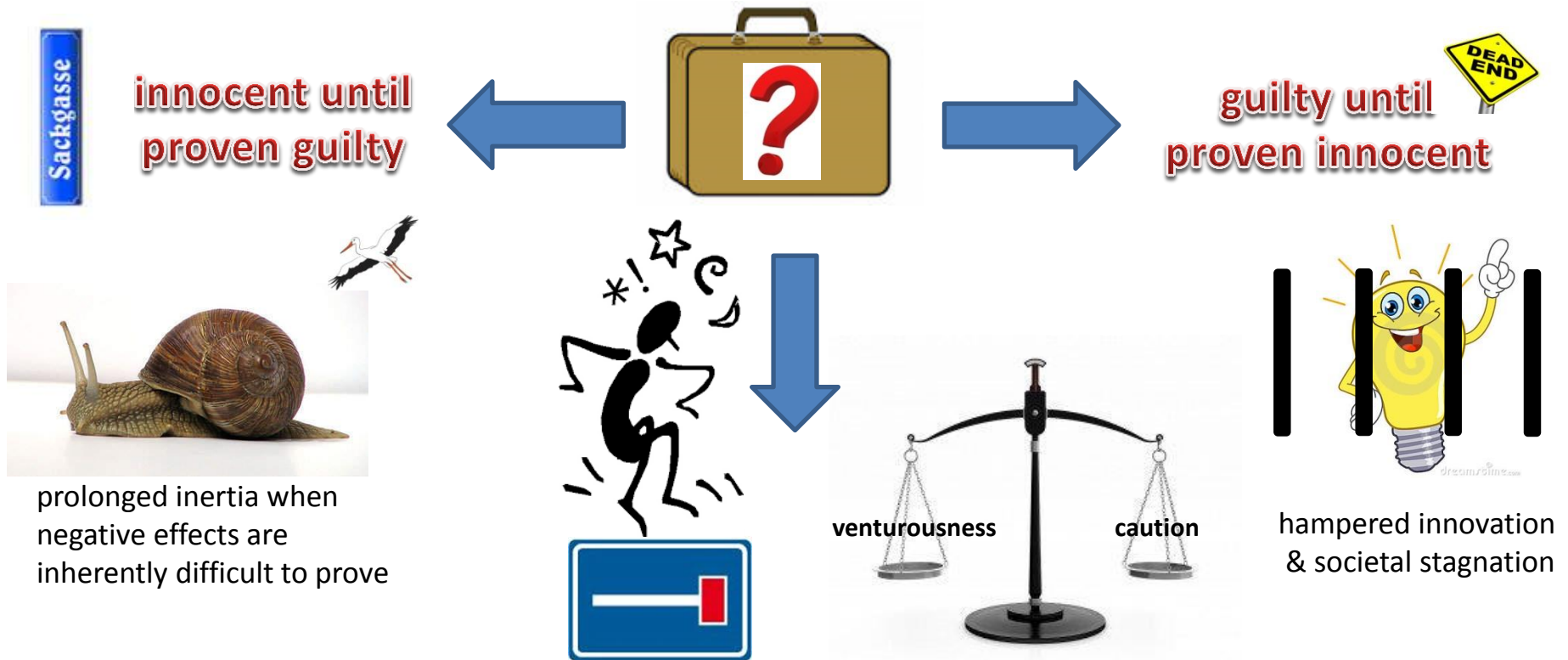
Benefits of dealing carefully with uncertainty



- More transparent decisions
- Proper balance between short term benefits and (more) uncertain drawbacks in the longer term
- Simultaneous attention to potential adverse side effects during technology development right from the start
- Less change of overlooking early warnings, enhanced prospect for early intervention



# Prudent Precaution



prolonged inertia when negative effects are inherently difficult to prove

venturousness

caution

hampered innovation & societal stagnation

Government of the Netherlands has embraced this view on the precautionary principle

# Crop protection and local residents

## The issue

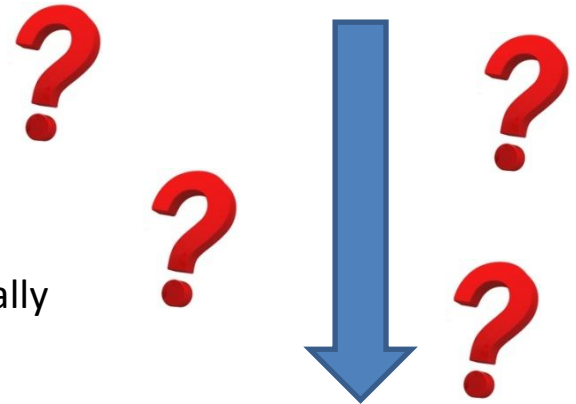


- 90,000 persons live within 50 metres of fields used for fruit or bulb cultivation
- Weekly sprayings during the growing season
- High usage levels: 40-70 kg/ha/y
- Local residents worry about their health and the health of their children

# Crop protection and local residents

The issue is characterized by considerable uncertainty

- Limited attention in authorization procedure for PPP
- Almost no measurement data on exposure
- Hazardous nature of PPP
- Some epidemiological evidence from abroad, but weak study designs, heterogeneous results, questionable relevance
- Health effects among local residents deemed possible, especially in extreme situations and in small children



Apply the precautionary principle i.e. deal carefully with uncertainty

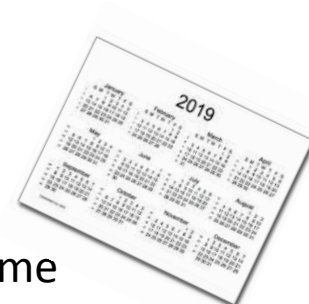


# Crop protection and local residents



What does it entail?

- Research among local residents
  - ✓ Start with exposure study
  - ✓ Combine a variety of research methods
- Improve authorisation procedure



Both are complex and take a lot of time

# Crop protection and local residents



What could be done in the meantime?

- Take measures to reduce the exposure of local residents
  - ✓ Focus on measures that involve little expenses
  - ✓ Focus on measures that are worthwhile anyway



- Promote IPM
- Inspections



- Product innovation:
  - ✓ Plant protection products
  - ✓ Spraying equipment
  - ✓ Precision pest control



# Crop protection and local residents



What could be done in the meantime?



- Give priority to safety
- Windbreak plants
- Good Neighbour Initiative



- Discuss concerns with farmers
- Use complaint structures
- Reduce own exposure

- Consider more expensive measures like no-spray zones

Government of the Netherlands has endorsed recommendations  
Consortium of research institutes prepares exposure study of >€8 million

