PYRAZOLE CHEMISTRY IN CROP PROTECTION

Clemens Lamberth

Syngenta AG, Crop Protection Research, Chemistry, Schwarzwaldallee 215, CH-4058 Basel, Switzerland; Fax: +41 61 323 8529; e-mail: clemens.lamberth@syngenta.com

Abstract – An overview is given of the significance of pyrazole derivatives in crop protection chemistry. The main herbicidally, fungicidally and insecticidally active pyrazole classes are presented, together with their synthetic routes, their modes-of-action and their biological efficacies. Indazoles and other bicyclic pyrazole derivatives are also covered.

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1 INTRODUCTION
During the last decades, intensive efforts have been undertaken to discover highly active chemicals with favorable environmental and safety features for the selective control of weeds, insects and fungal diseases. In several instances, pyrazole derivatives have been found as promising agrochemical products. The pyrazoles constitute a fascinating class of five-membered heterocyclic compounds with two adjacent ring nitrogens, chemically related to the other 1,2-azoles, isothiazoles and isoxazoles, as well as to the isomeric imidazoles, which belong to the 1,3-azoles. The progress in the extensive preparative and theoretical investigations on pyrazoles has been summarized periodically in exhaustive reviews.\(^2\) Also the chemistry of condensed pyrazole derivatives, such as indazoles,\(^3\) pyrazolopyridines,\(^4\) pyrazolo-pyrimidines,\(^5\) pyrazoloquinolines\(^6\) and other biheterocyclic pyrazoles\(^7\) is well documented. In addition, specific pyrazole derivatives, such as pyrazolones,\(^8\) pyrazolines,\(^9\) 5-aminopyrazoles\(^10\) and \(N\)-acylpyrazoles\(^11\) have been reviewed recently. This review deals with the agrochemical aspects of pyrazole chemistry as well as their bicyclic and saturated derivatives.

2 HERBICIDES

2.1 HPPD Inhibitors

The herbicidal activity of certain 5-hydroxypyrazole derivatives results from inhibition of 4-hydroxyphenylpyruvate dioxygenase (HPPD), the enzyme which catalyzes the formation of...
homogentisic acid. In plants, homogentisic acid is a precursor of plastoquinone, an important cofactor for phytoene desaturase. The enzyme phytoene desaturase plays an important role in the biosynthesis of carotenoids. These terpenoids are essential for the protection of the plant chloroplasts against light-induced radical degradation processes (photooxidation). Thus, inhibition of the carotenoid biosynthesis leads to the chlorosis of leaves, characterized by intense bleaching symptoms, and ultimately to plant death.\textsuperscript{12}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{scheme1}
\end{center}

\textbf{Scheme 1}

Figure 1 shows the five so far commercialized compounds from the class of pyrazole HPPD inhibitors, which was initially discovered by Sankyo. They all have in common a 4-benzoyl-1-methylpyrazole scaffold and bear an oxy function in position 5. Hereby the pyrazole mimics the diketone moiety of the isocyclic HPPD inhibitors sulcotrione and mesotrione.\textsuperscript{13} An important requirement for the herbicidal activity of HPPD inhibitors is the presence of an acidic enolic hydrogen atom in the $\alpha$-position of the keto group.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{scheme2}
\end{center}

\textbf{Scheme 2}
function in the non-benzoid ring and an electron-deficient aromatic ring containing an ortho-substituent. This is the case for topramezone (4) and pyrasulfotole (5). Therefore the three other herbicides pyrazolynate (pyrazolate, 1), pyrazoxyfen (2) and benzofenap (3) are pro-drugs, which are metabolically converted to the corresponding, herbicidally active 5-hydroxypyrazole. In this regard, the two rice herbicides pyrazolynate (1) and pyrazoxyfen (2) possess the same active principle: DTP (6) (Scheme 1).\textsuperscript{14} DTP (6) is not only the first metabolite of pyrazolynate (1) and pyrazoxyfen (2), it is also the last intermediate of their synthesis. It is prepared by reaction of 1,3-dimethyl-5-pyrazolon (7) and 2,4-dichlorobenzoic acid (8) to the ester 9 and its subsequent rearrangement to the ketone DTP (6) (Scheme 2).\textsuperscript{15}

The experimental 5-hydroxypyrazole HPPD inhibitor 10 combines impressive herbicidal activity against the important grass weeds *Avena fatua* (wild oat), *Setaria viridis* (green foxtail) and *Alopecurus myosuroides* (blackgrass) with excellent wheat selectivity (Figure 2).\textsuperscript{16}

2.2 PPO (Protox) Inhibitors

Several herbicides are inhibiting protoporphyrinogen-IX oxidase (PPO, protox), which is the last enzyme in the porphyrin pathway that is common to both chlorophyll and heme synthesis. In treated tissues, protox inhibitors cause the accumulation of protoporphyrin IX. This tetrapyrrole is known to be a potent photosensitizer, generating in the presence of sunlight high levels of singlet oxygen. This oxygen modification induces peroxidation of unsaturated fatty acids in cell membranes, resulting in membrane

\[ \text{Figure 2} \]

\[ \text{Figure 3} \]
leakage, pigment breakdown and finally necrosis of the leaf. Therefore PPO inhibitors are also called peroxidizing herbicides.

Specially substituted 3-phenylpyrazoles are highly active protox inhibitors. From this class, two structurally related cereal herbicides with completely different application timing have been commercialized. Pyraflufen-ethyl (11) is a post-emergent, fluazolate (12) a pre-emergent weed control agent (Figure 3). The straight-forward synthesis of fluazolate (12) starts from 2-chloro-4-fluorotoluene (13), which is converted by Friedel-Crafts acylation and subsequent aldol reaction into the diketone 15 (Scheme 3). Its regioselective transformation into the required 1-methyl-3-arylpyrazole 16 is achieved via a two step process by condensation with hydrazine hydrate and followed by alkylation with dimethyl sulfate. Direct cyclocondensation with methyl hydrazine leads predominantly to the undesired 1-methyl-5-arylpyrazole 17. The methyl group in the phenyl ring of 16 is then oxidized to a carboxylic acid function and bromine is introduced into the pyrazole ring. Finally the transformation of the carboxy function of 20 through the acid chloride to the isopropyl ester delivers fluazolate (12) (Scheme 3).
Pyrazole phenyl ethers, such as 27, are a further family of PPO inhibiting pyrazole derivatives. The synthesis route to 27 starts with the replacement of one of the chlorine atoms in position 3 of methyl trichloroacrylate (21) by a thiomethyl group (Scheme 4). The resulting methylthio acrylate 22, upon reaction with methylhydrazine, gives regioselectively the desired pyrazole 23, which reacts smoothly with 4-fluoro-2-nitrobenzotrifluoride to the pyrazole phenyl ether 24. Oxidation of the methyl sulfide to the methyl sulfone is followed by Bechamp-type reduction of the nitro function. Finally, the acylation of the resulting aniline 26 leads to the desired photodynamic herbicide 27.
2-Aryl-4,5,6,7-tetrahydro-2H-indazoles\textsuperscript{21,22} such as 28\textsuperscript{21} and 1-aryl-1H-indazoles\textsuperscript{23} such as 29, are further examples for light-activated Protox inhibitors (Figure 4). 28 displays strong activity against \textit{Echinochloa oryzicola} (barnyardgrass), \textit{Monochoria vaginalis} (monochoria) and \textit{Cyperus serotinus} (flatsedge)\textsuperscript{21}. Also 5-amino-1-arylpyrazoles bearing either a cyano group in position 4\textsuperscript{24} such as M&B 39279 (30), or a keto function\textsuperscript{25} such as 31, are inhibitors of PPO (Figure 5). 31 is very active against \textit{Brassica napus} (canola, oilseed rape) and \textit{Linum usitassimum} (linseed)\textsuperscript{25}.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure5.png}
\caption{Figure 5}
\end{figure}

2.3 ALS Inhibitors

Another important herbicidal mode of action, which is also basis for the weed control ability of several pyrazole derivatives, is the inhibition of acetolactate synthase (ALS), an enzyme involved in the early stage of the biosynthesis of branched-chain amino acids, resulting in a rapid cessation of plant cell division and growth\textsuperscript{26}. The three branched-chain amino acids valine, leucine and isoleucine are called “essential”, because mammals lack biosynthesis pathways to produce them and therefore must obtain them from their diet. This selectivity towards plants undoubtedly contributes to the favourable environmental and toxicological profile of ALS inhibitors. The most important family of ALS inhibitors are the sulfonylureas, which have been discovered in the 1970’s at Du Pont\textsuperscript{27}. Figure 6 shows three commercialized sulfonylurea

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure6.png}
\caption{Figure 6}
\end{figure}
herbicides, in which the typical phenyl ring bearing the sulfonyl function is replaced by a pyrazole. The methyltetrazolyl ring present in azimsulfuron (34) serves as an isosteric replacement for the carboxylate function in pyrazosulfuron-ethyl (32), which is common for the α-position of the sulfonyl group. Several syntheses of pyrazole sulfonylureas have been described in the literature.28-31 Especially intriguing is the synthetic route to the CF₃-analog 42 of pyrazosulfuron-ethyl (32), which starts from ethyl pyrazol-4-yl carboxylate (35) (Scheme 5). The introduction of a trifluoromethyl group into position 1 of the pyrazole is achieved by N-alkylation with dibromodifluoromethane and subsequent halogen exchange reaction with poly(hydrogen fluoride)pyridine coupled with mercuric oxide.28 This pyrazole can be selectively lithiated in position 5. The resulting organolithium species 38 is then tranformed via the lithium sulfinate 39 and the sulfonyl chloride 40 into the required sulfonamide 41. This lithiation method was used quite often for the introduction of the sulfonyl function into the pyrazole moiety of sulfonylurea herbicides.28-30 Finally, the sulfonamide 41 is converted with the phenylcarbamate of 2-amino-4,6-dimethoxypyrimidine to the CF₃-analog 42 of pyrazosulfuron-ethyl (32) (Scheme 5).28

![Scheme 5](image)

The synthesis of a pyrazosulfuron-ethyl derivative with an additional methoxy group in position 3 of the pyrazole moiety is also quite interesting (Scheme 6). The reaction of the 1,3-dithietane 44, which is readily obtainable from diethyl malonate (43) and carbon disulfide, with methyl hydrazine affords regioselectively the 3-hydroxy-5-mercaptopyrazole 45.29 After benzylolation of the thiol function, the hydroxy group is
methylated to the methoxypyrazole 47. Its oxidative chlorination and subsequent amination leads to the sulfonamide 48, which is transformed via the sulfonylcarbamate 49 into the desired pyrazosulfuron-ethyl derivative 50, which is highly active against *Abutilon theophrasti* (velvetleaf) and *Xanthium strumarium* (heartleaf cocklebur) (Scheme 6).²⁹

![Scheme 6](image)

Also sulfonylurea derivatives are known, in which the typical ureapyrimidine or -triazine moiety is replaced by a carbamoilpyrazoline. Examples for this interesting class of ALS inhibitors are the phenyl derivative 51 and the sultam derivative 52 (Figure 7).³³ The latter is a wheat-selective herbicide with powerful performance against *Solanum nigrum* (black nightshade), and *Galinsoga ciliata* (hairy galinsoga).³³

![Figure 7](image)
2.4 Miscellaneous Herbicidally Active Pyrazoles

The 2-(pyrazol-1-yl)-4-phenoxypyrimidine 53\textsuperscript{34} and its benzyl analog 54\textsuperscript{35} displayed strong broadleaf weed control at use rates of 5 – 10 g / ha in cereal field trials (Figure 8). Their herbicidal activity results from the inhibition of carotenoid biosynthesis.\textsuperscript{34,35}

Figure 8

Several pyrazole-4-carboxamides have been reported to possess remarkable herbicidal activity. EL-177 (55) was investigated for use as pre-emergent corn and post-emergent cereal herbicide.\textsuperscript{36} 56 is highly effective against an impressive broad range of weeds, such as *Echinochloa crus-galli* (barnyard grass), *Chenopodium album* (lambsquarters), *Brassica kaber* (wild mustard), *Digitaria sanguinalis* (large

Figure 9
crabgrass), *Abutilon theophrasti* (velvetleaf), *Setaria italica* (foxtail millet), *Ipomoea hederacea* (morningglory), *Amaranthus retroflexus* (redroot pigweed) and *Datura stramonium* (jimsonweed). The two pyrazole-4-carboxamides KPP-297 (57) and KPP-856 (58) show excellent and selective activity against the rice weeds *Echinochloa oryzicola* (early watergrass), *Cyperus difformis* (smallflower umbrellaplant) and *Monochoria vaginalis* (monochoria) (Figure 9). 

An economic synthesis of EL-177 (55) is possible from readily available precursors utilizing a novel regioselective t-butylation reaction (Scheme 7). Condensation of the sodium salt of diethyl oxalacetate (59) with triethyl orthoformate gave 60, which could be ring-closed with hydrazine hydrate to the pyrazole diester 61. Treatment of 61 with ammonium hydroxide provided the amide ester 62, which was dehydrated to the corresponding pyrazole cyano ester 63 with phosphorus oxychloride and potassium carbonate. The alkylation 63 with two equivalents of isobutylene and 0.3 equivalents of *p*-toluenesulfonic acid in acetonitrile at 80 °C for 24 hours affords the desired *N*-t-butyl pyrazole 64 in a regioselectivity greater than 90:1. Interestingly, the replacement of *p*-toluenesulfonic acid by strong Lewis acids such as aluminum trichloride leads to the exclusive formation of the undesired regioisomer 65. Finally, transformation of the

![Scheme 7](image-url)
ethyl ester function of 64 with methylamine delivers EL-177 (55) (Scheme 7).36,40

The 1,5-diarylpyrazole 66 possesses activity against a broad range of weeds, e.g. *Cyperus serotinus* (flatsedge), *Echinochloa oryzicola* (barnyard grass), *Eleocharis acicularis* (slender spikerush) and *Sagittaria pygmaea* (arrowhead).41 The imidazo[4,5-c]pyrazole 67 displays good post-emergent efficacy against *Abutilon theophrasti* (velvetleaf), *Sesbania exaltata* (hemp sesbania), *Brassica kaber* (wild mustard) and *Echinochloa crus-galli* (barnyard grass) (Figure 10).42

Two modern herbicides with bicyclic pyrazole systems have been recently introduced to the market. Pinoxaden (68) is inhibiting ACCase, whereas pyraclonil (69) is a PPO inhibitor (Figure 11). Pyroxasulfone (70) is currently under development.

3 FUNGICIDES

3.1 Complex 2 Respiration Inhibitors

The three 1-methyl-1H-pyrazole-4-carboxamides furametpyr (71), penthiopyrad (72) and bixafen (73) are respiration inhibitors, blocking the mitochondrial complex 2 (Figure 12).

These compounds possess the same mode of action as carboxin, the oldest fungicidal complex 2 inhibitor, which has a dihydrooxathiin ring system instead of the pyrazole moieties of furametpyr and penthiopyrad.
The earliest pyrazole analogs of carboxin have been reported already in 1976, bearing a methyl group in

Scheme 8
position 3. Other fungicidally active 3-methyl-pyrazole-4-carboxanilides have also been described in the years thereafter, leading finally to the discovery of furametpyr (71). In 1986, it was found, that the introduction of a trifluoromethyl group into position 3 of the pyrazole unit of complex 2 inhibitors results in increased fungicidal activity. Since then, 1-methyl-3-trifluoromethyl-1H-pyrazole-4-carboxylic acid (79), the acid moiety of penthiopyrad (72), has gained importance as suitable building block in fungicide chemistry. Scheme 8 shows different synthetic pathways to this compound. The most straightforward procedure for the preparation of 79 is the condensation of methylhydrazine with the 2-ethoxymethylene substituted acetoacetate 75, which is readily available from the convenient starting material ethyl 4,4,4-trifluoroacetoacetate (74). Instead of this ring-closure reaction with methylhydrazine, 75 can also be condensed with hydrazine hydrate to the pyrazole 76, which can be easily methylated with trimethyl phosphate. The obtained pyrazole ethyl ester 77 can be hydrolysed to the free pyrazole acid 79 under standard saponification conditions. Other possibilities for the synthesis of 77 include the reaction of ethyl dimethylaminoacrylate (81) with trifluoroacetyl chloride and methylhydrazine, as well as the consecutive bromination, lithiation and carboxylation of 1-methyl-3-(trifluoromethyl)pyrazole (80) (Scheme 8).

Just recently, an interesting synthesis of the pyrazoline analog 86 of penthiopyrad has been described by Mannich reaction of ethyl 4,4,4-trifluoroacetoacetate (74) with methyl hydrazine and formalin in the presence of catalytic amounts of hydrochloric acid in refluxing ethanol (Scheme 9). The intermediate Mannich adduct 83 cyclizes spontaneously to the desired 3-trifluoromethyl substituted 4,5-dihydro-1H-pyrazole 84, accompanied by only minor amounts of the corresponding

![Scheme 9](image-url)
5-trifluoromethyl-4,5-dihydropyrazole 85. The pyrazoline 84 can be converted via ester cleavage and amidation into dihydro-penthiopyrad 86 (Scheme 9).50

3.2 Complex 3 Respiration Inhibitors (Strobilurins)
The strobilurins are an important class of agricultural fungicides, the discovery of which was inspired by a group of naturally occurring fungicidally active derivatives of β-methoxyacrylic acid, e.g. strobilurin A, oudemansin A and myxothiazol A.51,52 The fungicidal efficacy of the strobilurins results from their ability to inhibit mitochondrial respiration by binding to the Qo site of cytochrome b. Cytochrome b is part of the cytochrome bc1 complex (complex III), located in the inner mitochondrial membrane of fungi and other eukaryotes. When a strobilurin binds, it blocks electron transfer between cytochrome b and cytochrome c1, which, in turn, disrupts the energy cycle within the fungus by stopping the oxidative phosphorylation and therefore the production of ATP.51,52

![Figure 13](https://example.com/figure13.png)

The introduction of a pyrazole ring into the sidechain of strobilurin fungicides results often in reduced lipophilicity (low log P values) and therefore enables the systemic movement of the compound through the plant. Examples for such quite polar strobilurins are pyraclostrobin (88), bearing a carbamate pharmacophor, and its oximeether-amide analog 89, which both possess a 1-aryl-3-oxypyrazole sidechain (Figure 13).52 Also strobilurin fungicides with a more rare 1-aryl-4-oxypyrazole moiety, such as 94, are known (Scheme 10).53 1-(4-chlorophenyl)-4-hydroxypyrazole (92), the sidechain of the β-methoxyacrylate 94, can be obtained from 4-chloroacetoacetic acid (90), which is decarboxylated in the presence of a freshly prepared aryldiazonium salt under the Japp-Klingemann conditions.54 The resulting 3-chloropyruvic aldehyde hydrazone 91 is then cyclized under basic conditions to the 1-aryl-4-hydroxypyrazole 92,54 which can be linked to an appropriate methyl pyrimidin-5-yl-acetate.55 Formylation and O-methylation of the resulting 93 finally leads to the desired fungicide 94, which is very active against the cereal diseases Erysiphe graminis (powdery mildew), Puccinia recondita (brown rust) and Pyrenophora graminea (leaf
stripe) (Scheme 10).

\[ \text{Scheme 10} \]

The introduction of a pyrazole heterocycle into the pharmacophore part of a strobilurin, as in 95, does not seem to be successful, because 95 does not possess any fungicidal efficacy. However, the highly active fungicide 96 demonstrates the suitability of pyrazole as isostere of the pharmacophore-bearing phenyl ring. The indazole sidechain of 97 contributes to very favorable physico-chemical properties of this agrochemical, resulting in high fungicidal and insecticidal activities (Figure 14).

\[ \text{Figure 14} \]

An interesting approach to the pyrazole strobilurin 96 has been described starting from maleic acid.
monomethyl ester (98) (Scheme 11). This starting material is converted into the aspartic acid derivative (99, which, via the thioester 100, can be cyclized to the methyl pyrazol-5-yl-acetate 101. The alkylation of its hydroxy function with 2,5-dichlorobenzyl chloride delivers the intermediate 102, which is transformed into the final product 96 by formylation and O-methylation.

![Scheme 11](image)

3.3 Miscellaneous Fungicidally Active Pyrazoles
Several pyrazolo[3,4-d]pyrimidines have been reported to possess fungicidal activity (Figure 15). The pyrimidine-4-thione 103 is very active against *Pythium ultimum* (damping-off), *Corticium solani* (black scurf) and *Magnaporthe grisea* (rice blast), whereas the pyrimdin-4-ones 104 and 105 are able to control *Helminthosporium oryzae* (brown spot of paddy) or *Botrytis cinerea* (grey mould) respectively. Also other [3,4-d]condensed pyrazole derivative show powerful fungicidal activities (Figure 16). The pyrazolothiadiazine-2,2-dioxide 106 completely inhibits the growth of *Pythium ultimum* (damping-off), *Sclerotinia minor* (lettuce drop) and *Corticium solani* (black scurf). The pyrazolotriazole 107 is especially active against *Fusarium culmorum* (head blight) and *Pythium ultimum* (damping-off). The 5-thiadiazolyl
substituted pyrazole 108 and its oxadiazole analog both possess strong fungicidal activity against *Rhizoctonia solani* (rice sheath blight). The pyrazoline derivative 109 is active against *Pyricularia oryzae* (rice blast) and *Erysiphe graminis* (cereal powdery mildew).

The pyrazole ring seems to be an appropriate isostere for several iso- or heterocyclic ring moieties in established fungicides (Figure 17). For instance 110, in which the phenyl ring of tricyclozole (111) is exchanged by a dimethylpyrazole unit, possesses activity against *Magnaporthe grisea* (rice blast) and *Botrytis cinerea* (grey mould). The amide 112, in which pyrazole replaces the thiazole ring of ethaboxam (113), is quite active against *Pseudoperonospora cubensis* (cucumber downy mildew). The pyrazole analog RPA 406194 (114) of the phenylpyrrole fenpiclonil (115) is effective against several fungal diseases.

4 INSECTICIDES

4.1 Chloride Channel Blockers (Fiproles)

The fiproles are a very modern group of highly efficient broad-spectrum insecticides, which act as
antagonistic inhibitors of the $\gamma$-aminobutyric acid (GABA)-gated chloride channel in the membrane of insect nerve fibers, causing neuronal cell hyperexcitability. Radioligand binding studies show, that they bind with higher affinity to insect than to vertebrate GABA receptors. Several fiproles are either currently in development or already on the market with a broad range of uses for foliar, soil and seed treatment as well as for the control of ectoparasites (Figure 18). Fipronil (116), the first commercial insecticide from this class, was originally synthesized as herbicide, because related derivatives, which bear a nitro function instead of the trifluoromethylsulfinyl group are herbicidally active.

The fate of fipronil (116) in animals and in sunlight is completely different. The major metabolite in insects as well as in vertebrates is the sulfone 122, which is definitely more toxic for mammals than fipronil itself. In spray solutions and on plants, fipronil photolyzes to its desthio derivative 123 via a unique concerted SO extrusion mechanism (Scheme 12). The synthesis of fipronil (116) starts from 2,6-dichloro-4-trifluoromethylaniline (124), the diazonium salt of which is trapped with ethyl 2,3-dicyanopropionate to 125 (Scheme 13). This azo compound is ring closed in the presence of ammonia to the trisubstituted pyrazole 126, which serves as central intermediate.
of the fipronil synthesis. It offers different possibilities for the introduction of the trifluoromethylsulfinyl group, the fourth substituent of fipronil. 126 can be transformed directly into fipronil (116) by reaction with trifluoromethylsulfinyl chloride, it also reacts with trifluoromethylsulfenyl chloride to the sulfide 128, which can be oxidized to fipronil. Alternatively, 126 can be reacted to the disulfide 127, which can be cleaved with bromotrifluoromethane and sodium dithionite via a radical pathway to the trifluoromethyl sulfide 128 (Scheme 13).

![Scheme 12](image-url)

Figure 18
Several analogs of fipronil (116) also possess potent insecticidal activities (Figure 19). For instance 129, in which the thioalkyl function and the cyano group of fipronil have changed places,80 and the tetrahydrocyclopentapyrazole 13081 possess high selectivities against the mammalian (mouse brain) GABA receptor. The trifluoromethyl group in the phenyl ring of fipronil can be replaced by a sulfur pentafluoride function, as in 131,82 or by acetylene, as in 132,83 under full preservation of the biological activity. The diazirine 133 is a structurally simplified, but highly potent fipronil mimick, which allows the photoaffinity labelling of the GABA receptor.84
4.2 Sodium Channel Blockers (Pyrazolines)

Several pyrazolines (dihydropyrazoles) are voltage-dependent inhibitors of the sodium channel. Hereby, the insects are paralyzed by suppressing activity in sensory nerves and in the central nervous system. PH 60-41 (134), one of the first insecticidally active pyrazolines, has been discovered at Philips-Duphar in the early 1970’s (Figure 20). It is very active against *Leptinotarsa decemlineata* (Colorado potato beetle) and *Aedes aegypti* (yellow fever mosquito). Also derivatives of PH 60-41 with an additional phenyl ring in position 4 or 5 of the pyrazoline have been described. Further optimisation of PH 60-41 led via 4,4’-disubstituted pyrazolines such as RH 3421 (135), which has been described by Rohm and Haas in the mid 1980’s to possess high insecticidal activity combined with low mammalian toxicity and a rapid rate of degradation in the environment, finally to the discovery of indoxacarb (136) at DuPont in the mid 1990’s. Indoxacarb is highly efficient against a broad range of insect species such as *Spodoptera littoralis* (cotton leafworm), *Heliothis virescens* (tobacco budworm), *Plutella xylostella* (diamondback moth), *Trichoplusia ni* (cabbage looper) and *Cydia pomonella* (codling moth).

The 3,4-diarylpyrazoline PH 60-42 (140) was found to have good activity against both lepidoptera and coleoptera species. It can be prepared from 4’-chloro-2-phenylacetophenone (137) by aldol condensation with formaldehyde and subsequent ring-closure with hydrazine hydrate to the pyrazoline derivative 139. Finally, the construction of the semicarbazid function of PH 60-42 is performed by transformation of 139 with 4-chlorophenyl isocyanate (Scheme 14).

Several interesting analogs of the highly active 3,4-diarylpyrazoline PH 60-42 (140) have been prepared (Figure 21). For example, the phenyl ring in position 4 of the pyrazoline can be replaced by a heterocycle, e.g. 1,2,4-triazole as in 141, which is highly active against *Plutella xylostella* (diamondback moth) and *Spodoptera frugiperda* (fall armyworm). Furthermore, the phenyl ring in position 3 of the pyrazoline can be tethered to the pyrazoline to form a tricyclic ring system, such as 142, or to the phenyl ring in position...
4 to obtain a tetracyclic ring system, e.g. 143.\textsuperscript{93} Quantitative structure-activity relationship studies in the pyrazoline area indicated the 4-substituent to be a key activity element in the structure.\textsuperscript{94} X-ray studies have shown, that in the preferred conformers these substituents in position 4 typically adopt an axial orientation and therefore are out of the pyrazoline plane. In the tricyclic tetrahydrobenzoindazole 142 the conformation of the pyrazoline ring is locked and the angular phenyl group is forced in the desired axial orientation. Another example for a conformationally restrained pyrazoline is the tetracyclic dibenzooxocinopyrazoline 143.\textsuperscript{93} Both compounds 142 and 143 are highly active against Heliothis virescens (tobacco budworm) and Spodoptera frugiperda (fall armyworm).\textsuperscript{92,93} The 1,5-diarylpyrazoline-3-carboxanilide 144 is the result of a
1,3 carbon-nitrogen atom inversion in the pyrazoline scaffold of lead structure 140 does not only show a striking overlap with molecular models of its role model 140, it also displays the same strong insecticidal efficacy.

The key intermediate in the straightforward synthesis of the pyrazoline 140 is the hydrazonyl chloride 146, which is prepared from the diazonium salt of 4-chloroaniline 145 by Japp-Klingemann reaction with methyl 2-chloroacetacetoacetate and subsequently converted to the pyrazoline 147 via a nitrile-imine 3+2 cycloaddition with 4-chlorostyrene (Scheme 15). The ester function of 147 can be transformed into the desired carboxamide 144 via the acid chloride 148.

![Scheme 15](image)

Also many further variations of the standard pyrazoline lead structure, such as the diverse alkylation, arylation, acylation and amination of the exocyclic urea nitrogen have been reported. Nevertheless, no commercial sodium channel blocker with a pyrazoline scaffold resulted from the tremendous synthetic effort in this field of chemistry, mainly due to unfavorable toxicological and environmental properties.

4.3 Miscellaneous Insecticidally Active Pyrazoles

Several pyrazole compounds are very active acaricidal respiration inhibitors. In contrast to the fungicidal complex 2 inhibitors (Chapter 3.1) and complex 3 inhibitors (Chapter 3.2), they interrupt the mitochondrial electron transport by blocking NADH:ubiquinone oxidoreductase (complex 1). Tebufenpyrad (149), its
bicyclic derivative 150, fenpyroximate (151) and the N-(1,3,4-thiadiazol-2-yl)pyrazolecarboxamide 152 are pure acaricides with strong efficacy against both Panonychus ulmi (European red mite) and Tetranychus urticae (two-spotted spider mite) (Figure 22). These compounds not only lead to a rapid knockdown of mobil stages, but also suppress the moulting process in larval stages of mites. Notably, N-(4-aryloxybenzyl)-pyrazolecarboxamides, such as tolfenpyrad (153), show additional insecticidal activity against both chewing and sucking pests like for instance Nephrotettix cincticeps (green rice leafhopper), Plutella xylostella (diamondback moth), Bemisia tabaci (whitefly), Myzus persicae (green peach aphid) and Frankliniella occidentalis (Western flower thrips).

The starting material for the synthesis of fenpyroximate (151) is 1,3-dimethylpyrazolin-5-one (154), which is in a Vilsmeier-Haack reaction simultaneously formylated and chlorinated (Scheme 16). Successive treatment of the resulting pyrazole aldehyde 155 with sodium phenoxide, hydroxylamine and 4-(tert-butoxycarbonyl)benzyl chloride delivers fenpyroximate (151).

Also pyrethroids containing a pyrazole ring have been reported to possess high insecticidal activity. The N-allylpyrazole derivative 158 is very active against Culex pipiens pallens (Northern house mosquito) and Blattella germanica (German cockroach), whereas the tetrasubstituted pyrazole 159 shows potency against Spodoptera frugiperda (fall armyworm), Heliothis virescens (tobacco budworm) and Diabrotica undecimpunctata (corn rootworm) (Figure 23).

The pyrazole methanesulfonate 160 is highly active against Diabrotica undecimpunctata (corn rootworm),

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**Figure 22**

The starting material for the synthesis of fenpyroximate (151) is 1,3-dimethylpyrazolin-5-one (154), which is in a Vilsmeier-Haack reaction simultaneously formylated and chlorinated (Scheme 16). Successive treatment of the resulting pyrazole aldehyde 155 with sodium phenoxide, hydroxylamine and 4-(tert-butoxycarbonyl)benzyl chloride delivers fenpyroximate (151).
Nilaparvata lugens (brown planthopper) and Nephotettix cincticeps (green rice leafhopper) (Figure 24). Also the corresponding pyrazoline methanesulfonates have been described to be insecticidally active. The 5-pyridylpyrazole 161 was found to be active against Aulacophora femoralis (cucurbit leaf beetle), whereas the 4,5-dihydropyrazole-5-thione 162 displays strong efficacy against Tetranychus urticae (two-spotted spider mite). Last, but not least, chlorantraniliprole (163) was recently presented by DuPont as one of the first members of a new family of highly active insecticides. These anthranilic diamides act as ryanodine receptor activators by causing the uncontrolled release of stored calcium from the sarcoendoplasmic reticulum, which results in impaired regulation of muscle contraction.

5 CONCLUSION
Natural products containing a pyrazole ring are quite rare. It seems that the evolution of organisms has produced few enzymes which cause the formation of nitrogen-nitrogen bonds. However, as we have seen, many synthetical pyrazoles possess powerful efficacy against weeds, insects and fungal plant diseases.
Figure 24

α-Keto or α-carboxyarylhydrazones, which are easily obtainable via the Japp-Klingemann reaction\textsuperscript{114} seem to be versatile intermediates for the synthesis of biologically active pyrazole derivatives.

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**REFERENCES AND NOTES**


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Clemens Lamberth was born in 1961 and studied chemistry at the Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany, where he obtained his Ph.D. under the supervision of Prof. Bernd Giese in 1990. Subsequently he spent one and a half years as a postdoctoral fellow in the group of Prof. Mark Bednarski at the University of California at Berkeley, USA. In 1992 he joined the agrochemical research department of Sandoz AG, Switzerland, which is today, after two mergers, part of Syngenta AG. Since 15 years he is specialized in fungicide discovery. He is the author of 75 publications and patents and the inventor of Syngenta’s novel fungicide mandipropamid.