



PRESS RELEASE



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ESA is the voice of the European seed industry, representing those active in research, breeding, production and marketing of seeds of agricultural and ornamental plant species. It represents more than 30 national seed associations (and with that more than 7000 seed businesses in the EU) and more than 60 direct company members.

ESA's mission is to work for fair and proportionate regulation of the European seed industry, freedom of choice for customers in supplying seeds as a result of innovative, diverse technologies and production methods and for effective protection of intellectual property rights relating to plants and seed.

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ESA regrets that Commission intends to push ahead with ban of neonicotinoid pesticides despite broad criticism

With a large number of EU Member States again opposing the proposed ban of three key neonicotinoid pesticides at today's Appeal Committee, the Commission (DG SANCO) again failed to win a qualified majority for its proposed restriction on this key crop protection technology.

This failure should compel the Commission to restart the discussion of the proposal, but most specifically the EFSA study that has been used as a justification for the approach, rather than forcing through the implementation of the ban as announced today.

ESA maintains its principal criticism of both, the EFSA study and the resulting Commission proposal as regards scientific base and process.

"The proposal is based on incomplete science and fails to take a large body of practical monitoring data of on-field use into account.", Garlich v. Essen, Secretary General of ESA comments on the outcome of today's of Commission and Member States.

Evidence from practical field applications of the pesticides from a number of Member States (most recently the UK) was neither taken into account by EFSA in its original study nor by the Commission in its proposal.

"The EFSA study has been a very theoretical and incomplete review. Given the importance of the products for productive agriculture in a large number of crops as shown by the Compass Report published by the Humboldt-Forum in early January, we consider the proposal disproportionate. It would have been correct to first get the science complete, then have a proper discussion of that science, and only then come up with a proposal that tries to manage the remaining risks." von Essen says.

He also sees the Commission's approach outdated by the industry's quality assurance scheme ESTA (European Seed Treatment Assurance, www.euroseeds.org/esta).

"Dust from badly treated seed is no longer an issue in the marketplace. As a professional industry, we have committed ourselves to respective standards, procedures and independent audits. This problem is already solved and shouldn't be used as justification for this disproportionate proposal."

ESA will continue to argue for a complete scientific review, including practical field monitoring data, by EFSA to start as soon as possible.

ENDS

