

Wednesday, 20 November 2013

Suspension of neonicotinoids - how the ban will work

10 May 2013 | By Olivia Midgley

NEONICOTINOID seed treatments have been used by farmers for the last 20 years, but a [suspension](#) on their use later this year could have a big impact on the farming [industry](#).

The [European Commission](#)'s decision last week to ban the use of thiamethoxam, clothianidin and imidacloprid affects crops which are attractive to bees.

Head of agronomy and [crop protection](#) sector at Agricultural Industries Confederation, Hazel Doonan speaks to Farmers Guardian about the ban in practice.

What do the new rules mean?

Member states must make the necessary amendments to the authorisations of thiamethoxam, clothianidin and imidacloprid by September 30, 2013.

When will the changes come into effect?

After this date, the use of thiamethoxam, clothianidin and imidacloprid as a [seed treatment](#) or foliar application will not be authorised on crops which are attractive to bees.

The treatment of seed will stop on September 30. However, sales and the use of treated seed is possible until November 30, 2013.

Which crops will be affected?

Oilseed rape seed treated with thiamethoxam, clothianidin and imidacloprid can be sold and drilled up until November 30, 2013.

Maize treated with thiamethoxam, clothianidin and imidacloprid can be drilled this spring but not after November 30, 2013. It cannot be drilled next spring.

The use of these products on winter cereals (sown before December 31 each year) will still be permitted, but use on spring cereals for sowing on or after January 1, 2014 will not be permitted.

What will be unaffected by the ban?

Certain crops, which are listed in the legislation annexes relating to neonicotinoids, are still permitted to be treated with the products post-flowering or when sown in glasshouses.

Crops not listed in the annexes are not considered to be attractive to bees and therefore fall outside the ban - this includes sugar beet and potatoes.

How will the regulations be implemented?

The draft implementing regulation permits member states to operate shorter timescales and also to continue with any existing national prohibitions in place.

As an example, this would permit France to continue its internal ban on treatment of rape for domestic use.

It is therefore also possible some member states will introduce a ban on use before November 30, 2013. There are no indications the UK would be one of these.

Readers' comments (10)

- sonofhood | 10 May 2013 10:11 am

If everyone did the right thing & moved over to organic, or at least a more holistic method of farming we would all be better off in the end.

- D.H. | 10 May 2013 2:27 pm

If that happened, everyone would have to pay more for their food, and more in the world would die of starvation. "better off"??!!

- Anonymous | 10 May 2013 4:51 pm

The preliminary text of the EU decision is here:

http://www.bijensterfte.nl/sites/default/files/10262%20Revision%20Appeal%20Committee_voted_29-04-2013_ChangesMarked.pdf

- Rev'd Peter Doodes | 10 May 2013 6:50 pm

If the bees are wiped out that will happen anyway Anonymous...

- M.B | 11 May 2013 9:05 am

Why organic? Why do people believe that organic is the solution. Copper sulphate commonly used as a fungicide can kill some pollinators and is toxic to birds, mammals and fish.

<http://www.mosesorganic.org/attachments/productioninfo/xsapprovedpesticides.pdf>

Has anyone thought that the cold water in spray tanks could cause shock to the bees, or the fact that most fields create a monoculture and a lack of food for bees?

I am in favour of protecting the environment but I get fed up of the farming community ultimately being blamed.

We are under immense pressure to produce food cheaply, which is driven by the consumer, whilst protecting the environment. the two don't go hand in hand.

I just don't think banning one pesticide group is the solution?

- Anonymous | 11 May 2013 5:21 pm

M.B | 11 May 2013 9:05 am

Has anyone thought that the cold water in spray tanks

or sodium fluoride in same water - damages enzyme systems in humans.

Hildegard Hill | 12 May 2013 8:18 pm

With regard to the immense pressure to produce food cheaply: If food were a bit more expensive and reflected wildlife and environmental considerations, less would be thrown away. Let's not forget that about a third of food gets thrown by consumers and supermarkets. And local authorities collect food-waste now. It's sickening, to say the least.
Hildegard

Dave Jackson | 13 May 2013 2:17 pm

Small farms worldwide have a far higher output per acre than the large monocrop deserts that have been created in East Anglia. The answer is to split these farms up have a greater diversity of species so that the insects which have the pests as a food source are not all but eliminated. I would have these pesticides banned completely, not just on, "crops attractive to bees" but it is the large areas of monocrop as much as the pesticides necessitated by this practice that cause the problem.

Dewi Jones | 18 May 2013 8:27 am

This is akin to shooting oneself in the foot. Even the BBKA (British Bee Keepers Assoc) does not support the ban. Since the introduction of Neonicotinides bee numbers actually increased, when prior to the early 90's they had declined.. It was for the reason of bee deaths that they were introduced because seed treatment was seen as being preferable to post emergent crop spraying. From the mid 90's bee populations increased, but over recent years they have suffered a serious decline. Most bee keepers attribute this to -

- 1) changing weather conditions.
- 2) Varroa
- 3) Sudden Brood death syndrome
- 4) European Foul Brood.

Some continental countries have consistently denied that their bee populations are contaminated with disease in order to preserve their 'health' status worldwide. So as the pressure builds they look for reasons to explain the obvious - so they say 'let's pick on crop protection chemicals' and ignore the consequences.

Following this ban, our bees will suffer a double whammy - less crop pollinators - so less nectar, and increased use of aerial spraying.

This is a serious situation which could have devastating effects on worldwide food production. 70 of the most important 100 food crops in the world are pollinated by bees.

Anonymous | 25 May 2013 8:26 am

Farmers always get the blame.

Lack of trees, blame the farmer, but who brought dutch elm and now ash die back to this country ?

FMD Farmers are still under restriction and will be for ever more because of lax biosecurity into this country, its easier to restrict farmers though.

Bees its our fault again ! Who bought veroa here ? Is that causing bee deaths, I often see bees in water tanks , on closer inspection they have a big mite on them. I am sure this is driving them crazy and the only way to dislodge them is in water. Look in a yellow water butt and there are always dead bees.

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