

<<< [To farmersguardian.com](#)

ARABLE FARMING

**Farmers
Guardian**
AGRICULTURE'S NATIONAL NEWS

EU pesticide policy putting food production at risk

1 December 2014 | By Olivia Midgley

THE Crop Protection Association (CPA) has used the one year anniversary of a moratorium on the use of neonicotinoids to call for a 'science-based' approach to EU policy-making decisions.

Growers have reported oilseed rape (OSR) yields down by about 30 per cent in some areas and many struggled to control the booming flea beetle population which was brought on by the unusually warm autumn.

A [HGCA](#) report published in September noted 2.7 per cent of the national winter OSR crop, equivalent to 18,000 hectares, has been completely lost to the beetles.

These losses also represent a reduction in one of the most abundant sources of early nectar and pollen for bees in the UK.

Last year, the EU suspended use of three neonicotinoid seed treatments - thiamethoxam, clothianidin and imidacloprid - due to their alleged impact on bee health.

[CPA](#) chief executive Nick von Westenholz said: "In the 12 months since then there has been a series of reports from growers who have seen yields fall and have had to revert to older crop protection technologies since the ruling came into force.

"What the past year has shown is that over-precautionary regulation denies farmers the use of vital tools because of theoretical and unrealistic threats rather than actual risks."

It comes after a [joint report](#) by the CPA, [NFU](#) and [Agricultural Industries Confederation \(AIC\)](#) claimed the availability of many more pesticides were under threat, posing 'real risk' to the production of food crops in the UK.

The report criticised the regulatory system at EU level which they said placed hazard rather than risk at the centre of its decisions.

Mr Von Westenholz added: "The crop protection industry is one of the most thoroughly regulated sectors in the world.

"This is as it should be; it means that where there are doubts about the safety or risk associated with a product – whether to people, the environment or wildlife – it does not get put on the market.

"But it is crucial that the system ensures proper risk assessment of products being placed on the market, so that we know they can be used safely while providing real benefits to farmers and consumers."

Related images



Register your email

Regular bulletins to keep you up-to-date

Get the latest from *Farmers Guardian* delivered straight to your inbox. [Click here to sign-up today](#)

- **Farming industry and breaking news alerts**
Minimum twice weekly delivery
- **Regular farming sector updates**
Four-week cycle

Already receiving bulletins? [Sign-in to edit your preferences](#)

