



Setting Pesticide MRLs in Food in the EU

Environmental Concerns in MRL Setting

Informative session for third countries

20 January 2021

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE
REGIONS**

The European Green Deal

11 December 2019

“Imported food that does not comply with relevant EU environmental standards is not allowed on EU markets.”



**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**A Farm to Fork Strategy
for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system**

20 May 2020

One policy area concerned by the European Green Deal

Others:

biodiversity, sustainable chemicals, sustainable agriculture,
clean energy, sustainable industry, building and
renovating, sustainable mobility, eliminating pollution,
climate action



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Farm to Fork Strategy: overall goals



climate
footprint



global
transition



new
opportunities



resilience

Reduce the
**environmental
and climate
footprint** of the
food system

Lead a
global transition
towards competitive
sustainability from
farm to fork

Tap into
**new
opportunities**

Create a **robust
and resilient**
food system



Reduce dependency on pesticides

One aim of the Farm to Fork Strategy

Others:

reduce dependency on antimicrobials, reduce excess fertilisation, increase organic farming, improve animal welfare, reverse biodiversity loss, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, empower consumers, reduce food loss and waste, combat food fraud, ...

Pesticides in the F2F Strategy - internal dimension

- Reduce the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides by 50% and reduce the use of more hazardous pesticides by 50% by 2030
- Facilitate the placing on the market of pesticides containing biological active substances
- Reinforce the environmental risk assessment of pesticides
- Reduce the length of the pesticide authorisation process by Member States
- Propose changes to the 2009 Statistics Regulation to overcome data gaps and promote evidence-based policymaking

Pesticides in the F2F Strategy

- external dimension

- Imported food must continue to comply with relevant EU regulations and standards
=> Pesticide residues: MRLs in annexes to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005
- Take into account environmental aspects when assessing requests for import tolerances for pesticide substances no longer approved in the EU, while respecting WTO standards and obligations



Environmental effects and import tolerance requests

- Policy under development - policy will remain WTO compliant
- Certain environmental issues are **matters of global concern** that go far beyond national boundaries
- Examples:
 - the decline and threat of extinction of pollinators in many parts of the world
 - the accumulation in the environment of persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic substances



Extinction of pollinators

- Concern about adverse effects of certain pesticides on pollinators
- Economic and environmental importance of pollination by animals
- Some neonicotinoids are a genuine and substantial contributing factor to a significant decline in insect pollinators (together with other factors) – toxic effects on bees are independent of geographical location
- Different level of concern for substances => case by case
- EU considers lowering MRLs for clothianidin and thiamethoxam to LOQ – other substances may follow



Accumulation in the environment of PBT substances

- Concern about substances that are
 - persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic (in combination: PBT), or
 - very persistent and very bio-accumulative (in combination: vPvB), or
 - persistent organic pollutants (POP)
- Stockholm Convention (UN) targets phase-out of POPs
- Problematic combination of properties => such substances affect future generations and are often transported over large geographical distances
- Concern that current quantitative risk assessment does not adequately reflect their complex behaviour



Environmental effects and import tolerance requests

- An **ambitious level of protection** is required that does not only look at EU territory and makes sure that environmental problems are **not simply shifted** over to other parts of the world
- **No prohibition** of use: trading partners are free to decide on the use of pesticides on their territory
- If harvested crop is destined to be **placed on the EU market**, it must comply with the MRLs in place in the EU



Pesticides in the F2F Strategy

- external dimension

- A more sustainable EU food system also requires increasingly sustainable practices by our trading partners
 - => Trade is significant and trend is further growth.
 - => External inputs have large impact on overall sustainability of EU food system.
 - => Avoid shifting environmental problems over.



Pesticides in the F2F Strategy

- external dimension

- Engage actively with trading partners, especially with developing countries, to accompany the transition towards the more sustainable use of pesticides to avoid disruptions in trade and promote alternative plant protection products and methods



=> Outreach, information, discussion
=> Promote global transition

Promoting global transition

- **International cooperation** to support developing countries in their transition to sustainable food systems
- Inclusion of ambitious sustainability chapter, including on food, in all **EU bilateral trade agreements**
- Work through **international standard setting bodies** (e.g: Codex) and promotion of sustainable food systems in international fora and events (e.g. UN Summit on Food Systems in 2021)
- Promotion of **appropriate labelling schemes** - to ensure that food imported into the EU is gradually produced in a sustainable way



Policy under development – but moving forward

- EU will develop a legislative framework for sustainable food systems
- Different starting points of trading partners
- F2F Strategy presents challenges but also opportunities
- Your questions – ensure common understanding
- Your criticism – ideally constructive
- Your feedback – what are your needs to transition to more sustainable use of pesticides





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THANK YOU !