



**Pesticide
Action
Network**
Europe

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Brussels, 02 December 2020

Sulfoxaflor and flupyradifurone more toxic to bees than expected

New scientific information shows that Sulfoxaflor and Flupyradifurone, two new generation neonicotinoid insecticides approved in the EU in 2015, are more toxic to bees than initially thought. The Standing Committee on phytopharmaceuticals meeting of 3-4 December will discuss the future of these substances. While the Commission proposes taking action, some Member States are pushing to maintain these bee-toxic pesticides on the market, repeating a familiar scenario where Member States hamper the protection of pollinators...

Sulfoxaflor was approved in 2015 under the condition that the producer, Dow Agrochemicals (now Corteva) provide additional information on the risk posed to honeybees and wild bees. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) assessed the industry studies and published its Scientific Opinion in March 2019¹. In the meantime, a series of scientific publications² have established the toxicity of this substance on honeybees and bumble bees at field-realistic doses. Since spring 2019, the future of Sulfoxaflor was several times on the agenda of the Standing Committee on phytopharmaceuticals but no decision was yet taken.

Martin Dermine, PAN Europe Environment Policy Officer said: *“The European Commission is proposing to ban outdoor uses of Sulfoxaflor, yet despite the clear evidence of harm caused by this neonicotinoid, Member States such as Ireland, Hungary, Belgium and Bulgaria push to maintain its outdoor uses.”*

In parallel, Flupyradifurone, another new generation insecticide is on the agenda of the Standing Committee this week: evidence from Bayer communicated to the Netherlands showed that the product is 15 times more toxic to a species of wild bees compared to the tested species: honey bees.

Martin Dermine said: *“As for Sulfoxaflor, the pesticide industry and the state of the Netherlands are trying to downplay the harm posed by these substances while scientific publications keep piling up on the dangers posed by this substance both to honey bees and to wild bees”.*

PAN Europe has written to the national representatives from the Standing Committee, asking them to adopt measures in line with the available scientific information and in line with the law: outdoor uses of Sulfoxaflor should

¹ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/5633>

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30111837/>
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32055075/>
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32752985/>
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32055075/>

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe is a network of NGOs working to reduce the use of hazardous pesticides and have them replaced with ecologically sound alternatives. We work to eliminate dependency on chemical pesticides and to support safe sustainable pest control methods. Our network brings together 40 consumer, public health, and environmental organisations, and women’s groups from across Europe.



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be banned as the Commission proposes, based on the assessment from EFSA, and the approval of Flupyradifurone should undergo a revision, based on article 21 of the pesticide regulation 1107/2009/EC.

“This is an awful déjà vu: first, pesticides are approved at EU-level, after having been presented as safe by the pesticide industry; then, some years later, scientific evidence shows they are not safe, yet the process to ban them takes years: it took nearly 25 years to finally ban 3 neonicotinoids in 2018! With the current biodiversity crisis we face, it is unacceptable that many Member States keep giving priority to agribusiness rather than to the protection of pollinators”, Dermine concluded.

Consecutive to the lack of actions from EU Member States to curb the use of pesticides to protect biodiversity and health and to support the transition towards agroecology, PAN Europe is one of the co-founders of the European Citizens Initiative *Save Bees and Farmers*³ that has collected over 450 000 signatures across the EU. The initiative asks for a plan to phase out synthetic pesticides, restore biodiversity on farmland and support the transition of agriculture towards agroecology.

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Contact:

Martin Dermine, Environment Policy Officer, Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe
martin@pan-europe.info || +32 486 32 99 92

³ www.savebeesandfarmers.eu

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