

# French plan for pesticide use reduction falters

<https://www.endseurope.com/article/1670234/french-plan-pesticide-use-reduction-falters>

Claudia Delpero, 08 Jan 2020

Progress on a decades-old strategy to drive down pesticide use in France appears to be stalling, after new figures show sales increased by 23% between 2017 and 2018

Data published by the ministry of agriculture on Tuesday show that pesticides sold for agricultural use rebounded last year after a 3% drop between 2016 and 2017.

French officials attributed the increase to climatic conditions and stockpiling ahead of a pollution tax introduced at the beginning of 2019. It also noted that, over the same period, the sale of pesticides of higher concern decreased by 15% and the number of organic farms has grown by 13%.

However, environment minister Elisabeth Borne has acknowledged that the 'Ecophyto plan', launched in 1998 to reduce pesticide use, "is not delivering the expected results".

In response, the government announced plans to publish more frequent monitoring indicators and instructed national [research institutes](#) to set up a technical committee to provide a robust interpretation of the data and to propose, when necessary, ways to strengthen the pesticide policy.

Environmental group Générations Futures said the situation was now "catastrophic" and wrote off the Ecophyto plan as a "total failure". It called on the government to establish more restrictive and binding rules for the agricultural sector, with fines for non-compliance and incentives for the best performing farmer.

Meanwhile, in a letter published in the journal Nature, a group international scientists suggested cutting the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilisers as part of a "roadmap for [insect conservation](#) and recovery."

The scientists warned that "anthropogenic stressors", such as habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, invasive species, climate change and overharvesting, are decimating insects and thus threatening food production and security. "We should not wait to act until we have addressed every key knowledge gap," they said.

[news@endseurope.com](mailto:news@endseurope.com)

**Follow-up:** French government [statement and related documents](#), scientists [roadmap](#) for insect conservation and recovery and PAN Europe [letter](#).

