



# **PAN Europe**

## **Pesticides Action Network Europe**

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*PAN Europe is facilitated by PAN Germany and PAN UK*

## **Joint PAN Europe and Ecological Council Briefing on esfenvalerate 11.7.00**

*PAN Europe is concerned that on 12-13 July European Union Member States will vote in favour of EU-wide approval for the insecticide esfenvalerate, against the views of the Danish Environmental Protection Agency. We urge European governments to vote against this approval because it poses a serious threat to the aquatic environment.*

### **Background**

Esfenvalerate is a synthetic pyrethroid insecticide. It is widely authorised for use under national legislation across Europe in agriculture, horticulture and forestry.

In 1996, the Portuguese authorities produced a monograph covering the health and environmental effects of esfenvalerate on behalf of the European Commission under Council Directive 91/414 which provides for a Europe-wide approval of pesticides. Subsequently, the monograph was discussed and peer-reviewed in secret by regulators from other member states, and responses channelled to the European Commission's Scientific Committee on Plants.

On 17 March 2000, the Committee published its opinion on esfenvalerate on the Web<sup>1</sup>. Its view is meant to assist the EU Member State representatives who will meet on 12-13 July and to decide whether esfenvalerate should be included in the list of approved pesticides under the EU's Annex 1 of Directive 91/414.

### **Recommendations from the Scientific Committee on Plants**

The report asked five questions about the health and environmental effects of esfenvalerate. Two controversial questions asked of the Committee are:

“Can it be confirmed that the proposed risk mitigation measures for aquatic organisms would avoid unacceptable risk for the aquatic environment?”

#### **The Committee's opinion:**

“The width of the buffer zones (areas where the pesticide is not applied) proposed by the Notifier (pesticide manufacturer) are not considered to be sufficient to avoid unacceptable risk for the aquatic environment.”

“Can it be confirmed that the proposed risk mitigation measures are adequate to protect non-target arthropods and honey bees?”

**The Committee’s opinion:**

**“Overall, the data show that the intended uses of esfenvalerate pose an unacceptable risk to non-target arthropods under Annex VI (Directive 91/414) criteria, unless specific risk mitigation measures are implemented. No risk mitigation measures for honey bees or other non-target arthropods were proposed.”**

Even if esfenvalerate was used according to ‘best case’ principles, the Committee expected that surface water concentrations in the environment could harm aquatic insect species<sup>2</sup>. High concentrations have already been found in Danish water courses in the range of 0.03-0.2 µg/l, which is high enough to reduce the abundance of many insect species.

***Danish points of view***

Hans Nielsen of the Ecological Council, Denmark has contacted PAN Europe, asking for wider European NGO support. He is concerned that Member States might ignore the advice of the Scientific Committee on Plants. The Danish Environmental Protection Agency considers the risk unacceptable for the aquatic environment, even regardless of proposed buffer zones.

***Recommendation:***

We think that the proposed risk mitigation measures are incapable of protecting aquatic communities. We are also concerned that the application of risk mitigation measures cannot be effectively controlled in most of the Member States. We therefore urge all EU Member States to vote against allowing esfenvalerate onto Annex I of Directive 91/414 at the meeting on 12-14 July 2000.

***Signatory members of the Executive Committee of PAN Europe are:***

Carina Weber, Chair

David Buffin, PAN UK

Génon Jensen, EPHA

Catherine Wattiez, PAN Belgium

Hans Muilerman, Stichting Natuur en Milieu

***Signatory members of the Ecological Council are:***

Hans Nielsen

***Co-signatures:***

Thomas Lenius, BUND -  
Bundesgeschäftsstelle

Till Locher, WWF Deutschland -  
Fachbereich Meere & Küsten

Uwe Friedrich, BayerWatch / Coordination  
gegen Bayer-Gefahren

Natalia Knijnikova, Ecological and  
Sustainable Development Council

Sven-Erik Pettersson, Svenska  
Lantarbetareförbundet

Bond Beter Leefmilieu

**Sources**

1. Opinion of the Scientific Committee on Plants Regarding the Inclusion of Esfenvalerate in Annex I of the Council Directive 91/414 Concerning the Placing of Plant Protection Products (pesticides) on the market, 17 March 2000.

2. Lozano, SJ, O’Halloran, SL, Sargent, KW, Brazner, JC, 1992, Effects of esfenvalerate on aquatic organisms in littoral enclosures, Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, 11:35-37