



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Food and feed safety, innovation
Pesticides and biocides

Brussels,
SANTE.E.4/MW/mb (2020)413823

Dear Professor Jäckel,

Subject: Your letter dated 16 June 2020 concerning nonselective herbicide technologies in Europe, including glyphosate (Our ref: ARES(2020)3143511)

Thank you for your open letter addressed to President von der Leyen, Vice President Timmermans and Commissioners Wojciechowski, Kyriakides and Gabriel, who have asked me to reply to your letter on their behalf.

In your letter you express concerns about possible negative outcomes for the European agricultural sector and food security in the event that the approval of glyphosate would not be renewed beyond December 2022 and on the lack of alternative non-selective herbicides available to EU farmers.

A new renewal process to determine whether glyphosate still meets the approval criteria laid down in the EU legislation on pesticides (Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009) has recently started. An application for renewal of approval of glyphosate beyond 15 December 2022 was submitted by the Glyphosate Renewal Group (GRG) to the Assessment Group on Glyphosate ('AGG' comprised of four EU Member States, France, Hungary, the Netherlands and Sweden) in December 2019, followed by a dossier in June 2020. Further information on the renewal process can be found on the dedicated webpage on Europa: https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/glyphosate_en.

As part of the renewal evaluation, the impact of glyphosate on human and animal health and the environment will be examined, taking into account all available information and the most recent scientific and technical knowledge. Once the AGG has prepared its assessment in the form of a Renewal Assessment Report (RAR), it will be transmitted to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) who will launch a public consultation¹ on it. I would encourage you to submit comments during the consultation. All comments will

¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/calls/consultations>

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be considered in the subsequent peer review. As for any active substance, renewal of approval will only be possible if the approval criteria are fulfilled for at least one use of glyphosate.

In reply to your concerns about alternatives of non-selective herbicide technologies, I would like to recall that one of the targets of the Farm to Fork Strategy² is the reduction of risks and use, as well as dependency of EU farmers on chemical plant protection products (PPPs). As part of the Strategy, the EU Research Programme will be reinforced to include research and innovation activities to support the achievement of the target. For example, a new Horizon Europe partnership for “Safe and sustainable food systems for people, planet and climate” will put in place a research and innovation governance mechanism engaging Member States and food systems actors from farm-to-fork, to deliver innovative solutions providing benefits for nutrition, quality of food, climate, circularity and communities.

Chemical herbicides can have effects on the environment, non-target organisms, and animal and human health. Therefore, EU and Member State policies seek to reduce reliance on these substances by, among others, designing and implementing more integrated approaches for pest management that at the same time safeguard the competitiveness of agriculture in the EU. Non-chemical weed management techniques range from preventive to curative strategies (e.g. crop rotation, cropping systems, tillage, mechanical weed control, use of alternatives to critical active substances) and cover both the organic and the conventional sectors. Several EU projects have been set up to stimulate such activities including Integrated Weed Management Praise³ (IWM PRAISE) under Horizon 2020.

In your letter, you propose changes to the regulatory framework as laid down in Regulation 1107/2009 in particular the creation of a ‘Preliminary Examination Board’ composed of stakeholder representatives. Please be informed that the Commission has recently published a report on the REFIT evaluation⁴ of the EU pesticides legislation to check whether it is fit for purpose. One of the main findings of the REFIT evaluation is that while the objective of protecting human health and the environment is generally achieved, the full potential is not yet reached, as efficiency of the implementation needs to be improved.

The Commission has identified sixteen areas where implementation need to be improved and has announced a range of actions to, among others, increase efficiency and transparency.

Let me conclude by emphasising that the Commission is committed to developing a sustainable food system to contribute towards achieving the climate and environmental objectives of the Green Deal.

Yours sincerely,

² https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en

³ <https://iwmpraise.eu/>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/refit_en

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