

Brexit – What does it mean for pesticide authorisation and use, and potential future water quality impacts?



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What I plan to cover today

How might Brexit affect pesticide authorisation in the UK and EU?

What benefits and opportunities are seen for the UK post Brexit?

What potential negative impacts might there be post Brexit?



<https://store.agra-net.com/reports/eu15.htm>



How might Brexit affect pesticide authorisation/use?

One of the main reasons cited by farmers for voting Leave was ‘over-regulation’. Defra has launched a ‘Red Tape Challenge’ to help reduce regulatory time and costs.

UK battles with EU over glyphosate, neonicotinoids, GM seeds, three-crop rule. Regulation EC 1107/2009 – but still very few new CP products getting to market.

“Every crop product that reaches the market costs US\$286 million and takes 11 years of research protection and development to ensure the highest safety and efficacy standards” - *Phillips McDougall* consultancy (part of *Informa*) <http://www.croplifeamerica.org/resource/phillips-mcdougall-the-cost-of-new-agrochemical-product-discovery-development-and-registration-in-1995-2000-2005-8-and-2010-to-2014/>

But could the UK adopt a more ‘permissive’ framework post-Brexit? Everything in the ‘toolbox’ from biologicals to gene editing, RNAi, CRISPR – using John Innes Centre, Rothamsted Research.



What benefits and opportunities are seen post Brexit?

A ‘bespoke’ UK model might evolve. Payments to farmers could be based upon delivering more specific “ecosystem” benefits – George Eustice, DEFRA minister.

Further integrated support payments and agri-environment schemes (modified EU Pillar 2). Supported by the three main UK political parties, National Trust, CPRE. In line with EU CAP simplification review. But will 25-year agricultural and environmental policy frameworks be merged?

A US-style risk and innovation approach, allowing for faster pesticide authorisation. An adaptation to a US-style or Codex Alimentarius system of maximum residue levels (MRLs) to modify or replace EC Regulation 396/2005.

‘Dual regulation’ process with EU scientific and technical committees and EFSA post-Brexit?

A UK-adapted version of the EU Water Framework Directive – rewarding farmers for greater use of beetle banks, pollinator strips, physical barriers, field margins.

Upgraded sprayers/nozzles; digital farming systems; slug pellets - based on using ferric phosphate instead of metaldehyde (Anglian Water trials).

<http://blogs.anglianwater.co.uk/making-the-slug-pellet-switch-to-protect-water>



Potential negative impacts might there be post-Brexit?

Would the costs of adapting to a specific UK authorisation scheme be welcomed by crop protection majors? Regulatory costs and hurdles have also increasing in the US over recent years, EPA staff cuts etc.

Would British farmers welcome reduced direct support payments or being encouraged to become more efficient and ecosystem friendly?

Smaller farmers might well go out of business (*Agra Europe* study) if there was an NZ-style ‘bonfire of subsidies’ as advocated by the Fresh Start group in 2013 – key proponents being key Defra ministers Andrea Leadsom and George Eustice – part of the so-called ‘Hard Brexit’ camp.

<http://www.eufreshstart.co.uk/>

**Will there be sufficient seasonal labour for farms and food processing?
How would NGOs react to more permissive CP policy regimes?**

Consumer reactions to GM crops, higher food prices, increased imports



Further speculations on a post-Brexit UK farming policy

- 1. A ‘permissive’ or ‘enabling’ authorisation policy might become more science and innovation-based for UK pesticides, but bear in mind that both Owen Paterson and George Eustice as ‘Hard Brexit’ Defra ministers previously refused to do battle with Brussels on a neonics usage derogation requested by the NFU.** <https://www.agra-net.com/agra/agra-europe/analysis/uncertain-future-for-crop-protection-approval-in-post-brexit-scenarios-515118.htm>
- 2. Current CAP payment levels are guaranteed for UK farmers to 2020. After that, a more liberalised regime is likely to mean a better targeted payments system, in line with envisaged EU reforms. But fewer and larger farms may not necessarily mean less farm to water pollution - depends on how this is monitored and sanctioned. Also a more devolved structure could emerge - Scotland, Wales, N. Ireland.**
- 3. UK would have more freedom on ‘actives’ approval potentially – i.e. the following are under at risk of withdrawn registrations in the EU: Iprodione, myclobutanil, prochloraz, tebuconazole, cyproconazole, epoxiconazole, fenbuconazole, metconazole, mancozeb, maneb.** <https://store.agra-net.com/upcoming-products/agrow-trends-in-the-incidence-and-management-of-fungicide-resistance.html>





Questions?

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