



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Ms Sara Steele
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

Our ref: TO2018/02153

24 May 2018

Dear Ms Sara Steele,

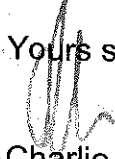
Thank you for your letter of 22 January to the Permanent Secretary about neonicotinoids. I have been asked to reply and am sorry for the delay in doing so.

Protecting our pollinators is a priority for this Government. They are an essential part of our environment and play a crucial role in food production. The National Pollinator Strategy is a 10 year plan published in November 2014, developed after a thorough review of the evidence base and wide consultation. It sets out the Government's commitment to playing a leading role in improving the status of the 1500 or so pollinating insects in England.

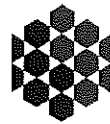
As you may be aware, pesticide active substances are assessed at EU level and are only approved if they are demonstrated to meet safety requirements for the protection of people and the environment. The UK is responsible for authorising products containing approved active substances. We will not authorise pesticides that carry unacceptable risks to pollinators. It is right that we use the best possible science to consider the right approach given the potential risks to bees and pollinators and the value of pesticides such as neonicotinoids to growers.

As you are aware, on 28 February the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published a further assessment of the risks of neonicotinoids to pollinators. The UK considered the final EU Commission proposals and on the basis of available evidence we supported further restrictions on the use of three neonicotinoid pesticides (clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam). Member States voted in favour of these proposals on 27 April. The current restrictions will stay in place until the new measures come into force following a phasing out period of approximately eight months, giving farmers and businesses time to adjust. Unless the scientific evidence changes, the government will maintain these increased restrictions after we leave the EU.

Yours sincerely,


Charlie Coombs
Defra
Ministerial Contact Unit

From the Permanent Secretary
Noel Lavery



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: SCORR-0033-2018

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7 February 2018

Dear Mrs Steele

Pollinators and Neonicotinoids Pesticides

Thank you for your letter dated 22 January 2018 outlining Belfast City Council's support of the further EU restrictions on neonicotinoid pesticide applications and that such restrictions should be retained in the event of Brexit.

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) recognises the need for further restrictions on neonicotinoids. On 6 October 2017 I wrote to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to support the UK position on the EU Commissions proposal to extend the restrictions on three banned neonicotinoids (clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam) so that they could only be used on plants spending their whole cycle in glasshouses.

DAERA also supported that the UK position should be guided by science.

On 9 November 2017 Michael Gove MP, UK Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, said that unless the scientific evidence changes, these increased restrictions would be maintained post-Brexit.

In relation to our exit from the EU, DAERA is working closely with Whitehall and the other Devolved Administrations in taking forward the legislative programme of work required. It is anticipated that the EU Withdrawal Bill will convert EU law as it applies in the UK into domestic law on the day we leave, so that wherever practical and sensible the same laws and rules will apply immediately before and immediately after departure.

The All Ireland Pollinator Plan includes the target to "increase the area of farmland that is farmed in a pollinator friendly way". DAERA contributes to this through the implementation of the Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS). The scheme provides farmers with support to fund environmentally beneficial actions on agricultural land.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.



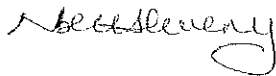
The EFS includes measures for the "Creation of Pollinator Margins on farmland" with "Annual Wildflower" and "Pollin and Nectar" options. Both options provide habitat and food for pollinators.

As agriculture in Northern Ireland is predominately grass based, there is limited use of neonicotinoid pesticides. The crops on which neonicotinoids are mainly used are not widely grown here.

Pesticide usage statistics, provided by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, indicate that, prior to the EU ban in 2013, neonicotinoids were used for seed treatment on 0.77% of the agricultural land in Northern Ireland.

I trust this is helpful.

Your sincerely



NOEL LAVERY
Permanent Secretary

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