

Vytenis Andriukaitis
Commissioner for Health and Food
Safety
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels

06/01/2016

Public consultation on endocrine disruptors

Dear Vytenis Andriukaitis,

I am writing on behalf of CHEM Trust, the Cancer Prevention and Education Society, Breast Cancer UK, the Alliance for Cancer Prevention, Pesticide Action Network UK, The Land Workers Alliance, Soil Association, Unite the Union and Hazards Magazine. This is in regard to the European Commission's report on the "Public consultation on defining criteria for identifying endocrine disruptors in the implementation of the Plant Protection Product Regulation and Biocidal Products Regulation,"ⁱ released in July 2015.

The public consultation took place between September 2014 and January 2015, with over 27,000 responses. 64% of respondents were from the UK – the majority of whom were farmers. A key issue highlighted by UK farmers was that crops would be insufficiently protected without a number of pesticides that would be restricted due to their endocrine disrupting properties.

Though we understand the importance of crop protection for the livelihoods of farmers and food security in the UK, we're worried that the UK farming lobby is putting short term crop yields before the health of farmers and their families, agricultural workers, the general public and of course the environment itself.

The regulation would phase out harmful substances gradually, allowing time to adjust and built into the regulation is the emergency use derogation where if it can be shown that nothing else can do the job these substances can still be permitted. We therefore believe that the farmers represented in the public consultation might be a vocal minority – with other farmers being rightly worried about the effects of some biocides and pesticides.

Multiple studies have shown that farmers and agricultural workers have increased risk of certain diseases, including: prostate cancer, breast cancer, brain cancer – in both adults and in children of exposed parents, and leukaemia. There are also suggestions that exposure to endocrine disrupting pesticides and biocides might be linked with other cancers, including bladder, stomach and pancreatic cancer amongst farmers.ⁱⁱ In a recent court case, Monsanto was found guilty of poisoning a French farmer who had been using Lasso weed killer, which caused him symptoms including difficulty breathing, headaches, and memory loss.ⁱⁱⁱ

As Commissioner for Health and Food Safety we hope you agree that protecting the health of farmers should be of utmost importance. As such, will you commit to protecting the health of farmers, their families, agricultural workers, the general public and the environment by supporting the restriction of these harmful plant protection products?

If you would like to talk to us further about this please do feel free to get in contact. We would appreciate hearing your views on this matter.

Please reply to:

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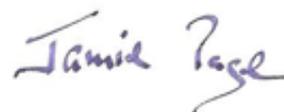
Yours sincerely,



Dr Michael Warhurst,
Executive Director,
CHEM Trust



Helen Lynn,
Campaigner and Researcher,
Alliance for Cancer Prevention



Jamie Page,
Chief Executive,
The Cancer Prevention and
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Lynn Ladbroke,
Chief Executive,
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Nick Mole,
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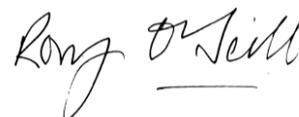
Adam Payne,
Coordinating Group,
The Land Workers Alliance



Helen Browning,
Chief Executive,
Soil Association



Len McCluskey,
General Secretary,
Unite the Union



Rory O'Neill,
Writer,
Hazards Magazine

ⁱ "Public consultation on defining criteria for identifying endocrine disruptors in the implementation of the Plant Protection Product Regulation and Biocidal Products Regulation." European Commission. 2015. Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/health/endocrine_disruptors/docs/2015_public_consultation_report_en.pdf

ⁱⁱ "A review of the role pesticides play in some cancers: Children, farmers and pesticide users at risk?" CHEM Trust. 2010. Available from: <http://www.chemtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CHEM-Trust-Report-Pesticides-Cancer-July-2010.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ "Monsanto guilty of chemically poisoning French farmer." Euronews. 2015. Available from: <http://www.euronews.com/2015/09/10/monsanto-guilty-of-chemically-poisoning-french-farmer/>