Benfluralin: Non-renewal of EU approval

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Non-renewal of the pesticide benfluralin for use in the EU

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/149 of 20 January 2023 concerning the non-renewal of the approval of the active substance benfluralin, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market, and amending the Annex to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 540/2011

Update

The EU has not renewed approval of the active substance benfluralin due to long-term risks to birds, mammals and aquatic organisms.

What is changing?

The Commission has not renewed the approval for the active substance benfluralin. European farmers will therefore no longer be able to use products containing this active substance.

Benfluralin is a herbicide used to control annual grasses and broadleaf weeds in a variety of crops, including corn (maize), soyabeans and cotton.

Why?

Following an application for renewal of benfluralin's approval, EFSA (2022) identified concerns about its long-term risk to birds, mammals and aquatic organisms, and about its genotoxicity potential. The necessary approval criteria were not satisfied and renewal was not permitted.

Timeline

EU Member States will withdraw authorisations for plant protection products containing benfluralin by 12 August 2023. A total phase-out of its use in the EU will be complete by 12 May 2024 at the latest.

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What are the major implications for exporting countries?

MRLs for benfluralin are already set at the limit of determination (LOD – the lowest level that can be detected using the most modern and reliable analytical methods). Suppliers exporting to the EU may continue to use benfluralin provided residues do not exceed existing MRLs (0.01–0.05 mg/kg).

Background

This Regulation updates the list of approved active substances established by Regulation 540/2011. The list can be consulted via the EU database of active substances, safeners and synergists. For further information see Latest pesticide non-renewals, withdrawals and restrictions.

Resources

EFSA (2022) Peer review of the pesticide risk assessment of the active substance benfluralin. EFSA Journal, 20(9): 7556.

European Commission (2021) Technical Guidelines: MRL setting procedure in accordance with Articles 6 to 11 of Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 and Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009.

Sources

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/149

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 540/2011

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