

Renewal of glyphosate approval

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EU renews approval of glyphosate

Commission Implementing Regulation [2023/2660](#) renewing the approval of the active substance glyphosate in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council and amending Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 540/2011

Update

The safety of glyphosate was confirmed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) following an in-depth review. This took place in the context of considerable opposition to the use of glyphosate from NGOs. The Commission's proposal to reapprove glyphosate did not have sufficient political support to be approved by EU Member States. Where this happens, the European Commission must complete the legal process unilaterally. The Regulation had to be published before the existing approval of glyphosate expired on 15 December 2023.

Impacted products

All products

What is changing?

The previous approval of glyphosate expired on 15 December 2023. The Commission approved the renewal for 10 years (rather than the maximum of 15 years) to allow earlier reconsideration of the large amount of ongoing research on glyphosate. Taking into account some of the concerns raised about glyphosate, the approval sets new conditions including:

- glyphosate cannot be used as a desiccant (i.e. to absorb moisture and control the time of harvest)
- maximum limits are set for five impurities in glyphosate
- EU Member States must take measures to ensure that non-targeted plants and the environment are protected.

Renewals of active substances are normally approved by EU Member States. In this case, at meetings on 13 October and 16 November 2023, not enough Member States voted to either

approve or reject the decision to renew approval. When this happens, the Commission has an obligation under EU law to adopt the decision.

Why?

In July 2023, EFSA presented its conclusion that glyphosate did not meet the “cut off” criteria to be classified as carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic for reproduction ([EFSA 2023](#)). The Commission therefore proposed the reapproval of glyphosate with certain restrictions related to impurities that might be present in the substance.

Timeline

Date of publication: 29 November 2023

Date of application: 16 December 2023

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

This decision has no impact on existing glyphosate MRLs and therefore no immediate implications for exporting countries.

Background

Glyphosate is a herbicide with regulatory approvals worldwide for a broad range of crops, typically used until the mid-1990s in the pre- and post-cropping of fields. Its use has expanded considerably since 1996 with the introduction of crops that are tolerant to glyphosate, including varieties of corn, soybeans, canola, and sugar beet ([Duke 2018](#)).

Opinion in the EU on glyphosate is highly polarised, as seen in the voting of the Member States. Several NGOs have formed a [Stop Glyphosate Coalition](#) which argues that EFSA has not paid sufficient attention to the impacts of glyphosate on the environment, and has ignored studies on its association with Parkinson’s disease. This view has the support of some political groups within the European Parliament ([Greens/EFA 2023](#); [The Left 2023](#)). Others disagree, pointing to the possible negative impacts of removing glyphosate on food production and food prices ([EPP 2023](#)).

Resources

Duke SO (2018) [The history and current status of glyphosate](#). Pest Management Science, 74: 1027–1034.

EFSA (2023) [Peer review of the pesticide risk assessment of the active substance glyphosate](#). EFSA Journal, 21(7): 1–52.

EPP Group (2023) [Green’s glyphosate ban will increase food prices](#).

Euractiv (2023) [Glyphosate’s fate still hanging after inconclusive EU vote](#).

European Commission: [Glyphosate](#)

European Commission (2023) [Glyphosate: no qualified majority in Standing Committee, proposal for renewal now to proceed to Appeal Committee](#).

Greens/EFA (2023) [Green/EFA urge the Council to ban glyphosate](#).

The Left (2023) [EU countries must permanently ban toxic glyphosate](#).

Vicini JL, Jensen PK, Young BM, Swarouth JT (2021) [Residues of glyphosate in food and dietary exposure](#). Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety, 20: 5226–5257.

Sources

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