Triflusulfuron-methyl: approval not renewed by EU

Published by AGRINFO on 10 Aug 2023; Revised 10 May 2024

EU has not renewed approval of triflusulfuron-methyl

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/2513 of 16 November 2023 concerning the non-renewal of the approval of the active substance triflusulfuron-methyl, 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 European Commission has decided not to renew approval of the active substance triflusulfuron-methyl. This is due to concerns about groundwater contamination and potential adverse effects on human health. EU Member States will have to withdraw authorisations for products containing triflusulfuron-methyl. This decision should have no impact on exports.

What is changing?

The Commission has decided not to renew its approval for the active substance triflusulfuron-methyl. European farmers will therefore no longer be able to use pesticides containing triflusulfuron-methyl.

For an overview of all withdrawals, see Latest pesticide non-renewals, withdrawals & restrictions.

Why?

Approval for use of the active substance triflusulfuron-methyl in the EU was set to expire on 31 December 2023. An application to renew the approval was submitted and evaluated.

EFSA (2022) identified several concerns, particularly endocrine-disrupting properties that may cause adverse effects in humans, and a high risk of groundwater contamination by metabolites of trisulfuron-methyl.

The Commission therefore decided not to renew approval for this substance.

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Timeline

This Regulation applies from **21 November 2023**.

EU producers will be permitted to use stocks of products containing triflusulfuron-methyl until **20 August 2024**.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

MRLs for triflusulfuron-methyl 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 triflusulfuron-methyl provided residues do not exceed existing MRLs (set at 0.01–0.05 mg/kg).

Background

Pesticide active substances are approved for up to a maximum of 15 years. Manufacturers may apply for reapproval for a period not exceeding 15 years. Work programmes have been developed by EU Member State authorities and EFSA for the systematic review of active substances. In some cases, active substances are not reapproved or manufacturers do not seek reapproval, so the substance is no longer authorised after the expiry date.

The approval of active substances is sometimes withdrawn before the approval expiry date, if specific consumer health or environmental issues are identified. In some cases, active substances are not withdrawn but their use may be restricted.

Where an authorisation for an active substance is withdrawn or expires due to non-approval or non-renewal, the Commission will prepare a draft measure to delete the relevant existing maximum residue levels (MRLs). In practice, the Commission starts this procedure once all existing authorisations for that active substance have been revoked. MRLs are either set to a default value of 0.01 mg/kg, or to the appropriate limit of quantification (based on specific data on analytical feasibility). MRLs based on the Codex MRLs (CXLs) are not deleted if there is no risk to EU consumers. Changes to MRLs are always notified to the WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Committee.

The timing of changes to MRLs as a result of the withdrawal or non-approval of active substances is difficult to predict. In its review of pesticide policy, the Commission committed to "enhance communication efforts on the impacts of the PPP Regulation on MRLs as well as the timing of the various procedures to make the EU system more predictable for non-EU countries, including for the cut-off criteria" (European Commission 2020).

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Import tolerances can be requested in anticipation of potential changes to MRLs (see the Commission's Overview of import tolerances). Applicants must demonstrate the existence of relevant good agricultural practices (GAP) in the country of origin, and the safety of the proposed MRLs. Guidelines are available on the requirements and process for the establishment of MRLs, including import tolerances (European Commission 2021).

Resources

EFSA (2022) Peer review of the pesticide risk assessment of the active substance triflusulfuron■methyl. EFSA Journal, 20(5): 7303.

European Commission (2020) Evaluation of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 on the placing of plant protection products on the market and of Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides.

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) 2023/2513

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