

Bulletin #1

Seed Treatment WG

SEED APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES' CHALLENGES AROUND THE WORLD

During the group's face to face meeting in Montevideo this past September, it was agreed that through the SAA STWG, articles relating to Seed Applied Technologies, should be produced and shared within the group's members. These articles would be based on research done around the world, for example. With this in mind, we would like to share with you a brief overview on the main resolution of the European Union General Court, in Luxembourg, on May 17th, 2018.

Also, in this bulletin are the press releases from Syngenta and Bayer about the results of this resolution. As well as, will touch on the seed applied insecticide situation in Canada.

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the public hearing at the European Union General Court on May 17, 2018, was to confirm restrictions imposed back in 2013 across the European Union on the insecticides Clothianidin, Imidacloprid and Thiamethoxam, due to the risk these pose to bees. In 2013, there was also a restriction on Fipronil, which was later canceled because there had been no impact studies done.

As of 2008, environmental organizations have been putting pressure worldwide, but, Europe has been pressured the most to restrict seed applied insecticides. According to these organizations, the molecules could be the main reason for Bee Colony Collapse Syndrome. However, bee population decrease around the world is currently unknown, but, there have been many scientific studies done recently showing that, bee health has been affected by a variety of causes, without any being the prominent one.

In 2012, the European Commission decided to review the granted approvals to the active ingredients Clothianidin, Imidacloprid and Thiamethoxam (neonicotinoids), as well as, the active ingredient Fipronil (fenilpyrazole). The European Commission asked European Food Security Agency to evaluate these molecules, regarding bee health.

Through regulation 485/2013, the European Union decided to restrict certain uses of three neonicotinoids (Clothianidin, Imidacloprid and Thiamethoxam) and established May 2015 as the deadline for companies to produce data and thus, complete the risk evaluation of the active ingredients for the remaining uses. Which are:

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- All interior and exterior profesional uses
- All uses as seed or soil treatment in cereals, when these are planted between January and June: barley, millet, oats, rye, sorghum, triticale and wheat;
- All foliar application on the following cereals: barley, Millet, oats, rice, rye, sorghum, triticale and wheat.
- All uses as seed treatment, soil or foliar application on around 100 crops, including rapeseed, soybeans, sunflower and corn, except for use in greenhouses and foliar application after fowering.

This regulatory implementation, also suspended as of December 2013, use and offer to the market of certain crops' seed treated with the aforementioned substances (including summer seed of cereals, rapeseed, soybeans, sunflowers and corn) except for seed used in greenhouses. After two years, the European Comission decided to restrict all exterior uses of neonicotinoides arguing that present as potential risk for wild pollinators, honey bees and bumble bees.

On August 14, 2013, the Comission also implemented regulation no. 781/2013 relating to Fipronil which indicates:

- As of August 16, 2016 use restriction of plant protecting products containing Fipronil to greenhouse crops and seed of: leek, onion, Restricción, a partir de 16 de agosto de 2016, del uso de productos protectores de plantas que contengan Fipronil, a cultivos en invernaderos y a semilla de puerro, cebolla, shallots and the brasica group destined to plant in the field and harvest before flowering.
- Phibits, as of March 1, 2014 use and offer to market treated seed with plant protection products containing fipronil excepting seed of leek, onion, shallots and brasicas planted in open fields and harvested before flowering. (Data taken from Eurpean Union General Court press release number 68/18 dated May 17, 2018)

The European Union member states, were also required to review and adjust existing registrations and approvals in their countries on the uses of the mentioned molecules. In the case of Fiprobil, the deadline was December 31, 2013 (with an extension no later tan February 28, 2014)

Given the results and press release obtained on May 17, 2018, Bayer Crop Science and Syngenta gave their positioning about these, and, given that, on studies done by EFSA, there was in a 5% only, a high risk of negative effects in pollinators, in a 25% of the results, there was an uncertain risk and in 70% of the Studies, risk to pollinators was low. However, the two companies remain compromised in promote and bringing new technologies to the market, based on Science that can bring a benefit to growers and the environment, thus, continue to strive on reaching food security for the ever growing world population.

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On the other hand, or, side of the world, rather, the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec also restricted use of neonicotinoids in corn and soybeans, unless the crop shows an early pest attack early in the establishment stages. In this case, growers can get a prescription for use from a provincially certified agronomist. In 2016, the Canadian government decided to remove Imidacropid from the market within the following three to five years, with a review period that has already ended. And, this year, has put in risk the removal of Clothianidin and Thiamethomxam from the market in the western prairies, where up to 25.5 mio hectares are planted, the majority to wheat and canola. These molecules are the most effective in early control of Elateroidea in cereals and Chrysomileidae in canola

The Canadian industry has pushed back on the proposed use restriction and presented the adverse affects to the environment of this action, as it would create the need to apply foliar insecticides more often and in larger quantities than what is being used currently; in the mean time, this would also increase costs of production to growers. This has been seen in Europe, since the registration suspension of the molecules in the región. Also, there has been an important área reduction of crops such as rapeseed, due to a large increase in production costs of the crop.

In August of 2018, PMRA began reviews Thiamethoxam and Clothianidin citing that there are risks posed to acquatic insect population. However, they have not found any supporting evidence that shows these claims.

LINK TO OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS [CURIA/European Union](#)

Attached press releases by Bayer & Syngenta

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