

EU Proposes 2-Year Ban on Some Neonicotinoid-Pesticide Uses

By Rudy Ruitenberg - Jan 31, 2013 7:43 PM GMT+0200

European regulators proposed a two-year ban on some uses of neonicotinoid insecticides produced by [Bayer AG \(BAYN\)](#) and [Syngenta AG \(SYNN\)](#) because of risks to honey-bee health.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, proposed a suspension on the use of three neonicotinoids on sunflowers, rapeseed, corn and cotton, spokesman Frederic Vincent said at a press conference in Brussels today.

"This is for the crops that most attract bees," Vincent said. "This doesn't concern crops that don't attract bees, and also not crops that are planted in autumn."

The class of pesticides, which works on the central nervous-system of insects, pose a "high acute risk" to bees through the nectar and pollen of some treated crops and through drifting dust, the European Food Safety Authority wrote in a Jan. 16 report.

Slovenia already banned use of all neonicotinoids, [France](#) has suspended the use on rapeseed and Italy and [Germany](#) banned the use of the pesticides on corn, according to Vincent. The proposal is now open for discussion by EU members, he said.

"The next step will be the preparation by the European Commission of regulation," Vincent said. "We hope that this regulation could be accepted by the end of winter, maybe before March, which would mean that the ban in question would become effective as of July 1."

The commission is proposing to exclude planting material for corn from the ban for this year, according to the spokesman.

Bayer urged EU countries to weigh whether the proposed measures will put the competitiveness of European agriculture at risk. The proposal is "draconian" and "overly conservative," the company wrote in an e-mailed statement today.

Declining bee populations have "nothing to do with chemicals," Syngenta's Chief Operating Officer John Atkin said in an interview yesterday. The parasitic mite varroa destructor is the most important factor behind the drop because it transmits diseases such as the deformed-wing virus, he said.

To contact the reporter on this story: Rudy Ruitenberg in Paris at rruitenberg@bloomberg.net

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Claudia Carpenter at ccarpenter2@bloomberg.net