The UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP)

# Advice to Ministers

# Applications for an emergency authorisation for the use of ‘Insyst’ as an insecticide on sugar beet

**Issue**

1. The Government has received an application for an emergency authorisation for the use of ‘Insyst’ (contains acetamiprid) for use as an insecticide on sugar beet to control virus yellows complex transmitted by the virus vector, peach-potato aphid (*Myzus persicae*).

**Action required**

2. The Committee was requested to provide advice on the risk assessment for this application.

**Discussion**

3. The Committee noted:

- That the sugar beet industry has relied on neonicotinoid seed treatments (containing thiamethoxam and clothianidin) to control virus yellows complex transmitted by the virus vector, peach-potato aphid for 25 years. Authorisations for the outdoor use of these products were withdrawn in 2018. The industry has not had sufficient time to generate data to support standard on-label authorisations for alternative products, though work is currently on-going.

- The urgency of the application, with pest pressure developing sooner than expected. Without a suitable method of control, growers were facing yield and financial losses.

- This was a new application for the use of Insyst.

- Any emergency authorisation would only be used in England (primarily the Eastern counties).

- HSE had concluded that:

  - The applicant had demonstrated a suitable ‘case for need’, noting, in particular, the anticipated shortfall in availability of the product ‘Biscaya’.

  - Non-dietary exposure risks were acceptable provided users wore suitable Personal Protective Equipment.

- Consumer exposure assessments included an element of uncertainty, due to the number of supporting field trial data, but that the available evidence provided an assurance that Maximum Residue Levels would not be exceeded and that the use would not harm human health.

- The environmental fate and behaviour assessment did not identify any harm to groundwater quality.

- Ecotoxicological risks were acceptable for virtually all compartments provided appropriate risk mitigation was imposed. Risks to non-target arthropods are to be mitigated by the imposition of a 10m buffer zone and use of two-star drift reducing technology, but it is uncertain whether this will afford the usual degree of assurance.

**Committee advice and views**

4. The Committee advised that:

   - based on the evidence presented and the product being used in the way proposed by HSE, it was possible to manage key risks to human health and the environment.

   - Government should take account of, and look to minimise the risk of, an excessive number of consecutive sprays of products containing neonicotinoid pesticides that have been approved for emergency use (in order to address resistance and environmental risks).

5. ECP also took the view that:

   - A case for need had been demonstrated (potentially significant agronomic impacts arising from a failure to manage the pests and a lack of a suitable range of control options).

   - It would be appropriate to: review guidance on aphid monitoring to resolve inconsistencies; undertake monitoring in all fields and report this at field level to improve understanding of pest pressures;

   - It was not possible to conclude that acetamiprid is not toxic to earthworms from the data provided, but that the impact of pesticide use would be extremely limited compared to wider land management practices, in particular, seed bed preparation.

   - Work to breed resistant varieties appeared to have the potential to avoid long-term reliance on emergency authorisations.

   - Buffer zone mitigation advice could be reviewed to avoid the risks associated with the implication that nozzles be changed between or within fields.

6. The Committee considered that the basis of a suitable case had been presented and that the Government could consider granting an emergency authorisation.

**UK Expert Committee on Pesticides**
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