

UK Expert Committee on Pesticides Annual Report 2018

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Health and Safety Executive



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This document is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/expert-committee-on-pesticides>

Chair's foreword

Welcome to the 2018 Annual Report of the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP). The committee provides independent advice to UK government and the devolved administrations on matters related to the authorisation and use of pesticides.

I think it is only right to begin by thanking all the individuals and organisations who contributed to our work. This includes: committee members, advisors and assessors who fully and robustly discuss the important and complex matters that come before ECP. They display great understanding, judgement and expertise in addressing these. Also, the government officials and representatives of other organisations who have been questioned by and advised us. It is critical that a range of opinions are brought to bear and arguments and views are fully tested so our advice is soundly based. We appreciate the time and effort given by those who have helped ensure ECP advice is based on a deep, comprehensive and independent understanding of relevant issues and that pesticides are regulated in the most appropriate fashion.



In my foreword last year I highlighted that 'change' was likely to be a theme of committee business in 2018. This has indeed been the case as the committee has geared up to meet the challenges and help deliver the opportunities that will emerge from the UK's exit from the EU. We have been broadening the scope of our involvement in policy issues and reviewing the way we work to best support government and society in transitioning to new arrangements. We also see change for those who use pesticides as, over time, increasingly strict regulation has led to the loss of important chemicals and products. This impacts on committee business as those responsible for the cultivation of crops and

managing amenity spaces seek increasing numbers of emergency authorisations to deal with pests, weeds and diseases. There will be a need to maximise the use of integrated pest management in future to ensure society derives the greatest benefits of pesticide use.

We have also seen change in the make-up of the committee. The three new members who joined us at the end of 2017 are now contributing fully and effectively to our business and we were joined in late 2018 by Dr Mick Whelan, our new fate and behaviour specialist. Mick replaces Professor Gary Bending who stepped down from this post to devote more time to academic activities. We wish to note our particular thanks to Gary who was a member of the committee for six years.

One particularly interesting aspect of our work last year was engaging with the wider stakeholder community. We hosted a well-attended open meeting in the spring and in September heard views from civil society organisations as to how pesticide regulation might be developed. Events such as these give the committee much food for thought and it is something we will seek to do more of in the future.

We are sure you will find this report an interesting and informative summary of the committee and our work. If you have any questions about this report or our activities, please contact our Secretariat whose contact details can be found on page 22.



Professor W Cushley
Chair, UK Expert Committee on Pesticides

Role of the committee

The ECP is a Defra Expert Committee providing independent scientific advice to ministers and governments (including those in the devolved administrations) on the authorisation of pesticides in the UK and on other matters related to the control of pests more broadly. Our Terms of Reference are set out in Annex 1.

A list of our members can be found at Annex 2. Our committee contains a mix of expertise. Some of us are academics working in specialist areas of study relevant to assessing the risks and benefits of pest control. Others are appointed to consider issues from a public perspective. We also have members with practical experience of pesticide use and regulation in the farming and amenity sectors.



Members are appointed following open public recruitment. We are appointed as independent individuals, not representing any particular interest. In line with the Nolan principles on public life we have declared any aspects of our work that may be perceived to present a potential conflict of interest. Members also work in accordance with the committee's Code of Practice. We declare and describe any potential conflict of interest.

We seek to operate transparently, publishing the agendas of our meetings and a detailed record of our discussions, and holding occasional open meetings. Due to the commercially confidential nature of some of our deliberations, however, it is necessary to assess the amount of information we put into the public domain. In some cases, we therefore do not publish commercially sensitive material.

Our work in 2018

Day-to-day regulation of pesticides is carried out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Anyone wishing to market pesticides must obtain an authorisation to do so. Authorisations are granted by HSE provided a robust evaluation of data demonstrates that use of the product will not harm human health or have unacceptable effects on the environment. Legal restrictions are placed on the way products must be used (for example, amount applied, timing of application, need for operators to wear protective clothing, avoiding applications close to environmental features, etc.) to ensure safety.

ECP business involves considering a small proportion of HSE's work, generally the more difficult and novel cases. Each year we undertake an exercise to 'quality assure' the 'routine' HSE casework. The committee's most recent assessment of the casework (for 2017) concluded that HSE considers applications for the authorisation of pesticides robustly and appropriately, with decisions being made on a sound evidential and scientific basis. We believe this provides independent reassurance to the public and ministers that the regulatory system functions appropriately.



In common with recent years, providing advice to government on applications for the emergency authorisation of pesticide products has been an important and high-profile part of our activities. During 2018 we considered and provided advice on 27 applications related to control of pests, weeds or diseases in a wide variety of crops and situations. The majority of these related to horticultural production, perhaps reflecting the fact that the pesticide review programme has resulted in the loss of access to chemistry required by these growers. Other emergency authorisation applications related to: agricultural situations; management of waterways; ornamental cultivation; amenity grassland and managed amenity turf; and upland management.

In many cases, justification for an emergency authorisation was provided, addressing issues such as:

- the case for need and lack of suitable alternative control methods
- how to limit and control the use
- avoiding continued reliance on this form of authorisation
- establishing that the risks from any potential uses are understood



In seven cases we advised that an insufficiently robust case had been presented. In four cases additional information was presented, resulting in advice from the committee that an application be granted. In the remaining three cases we advised that we could not support granting of an authorisation.

Notable applications which we considered related to the use of:

- neonicotinoid seed treatments – we advised these be refused, largely on the basis of potential environmental risks
- a product containing the active substance linuron for control of volunteer potatoes – we noted that a recent review of linuron was unable to conclude satisfactory risks arising from dietary exposure and advised that for this and other reasons that the application be refused
- products to provide a control programme for an invasive pest (spotted wing drosophila) on a range of fruit crops – we advised these be granted due to the pressing need for control, limited scale of use and that there was no long-term reliance on emergency authorisations

Other aspects of our work included assessing and mitigating the risks from pesticide use, seen through:

- the government's review of habitat protection zone
- a new methodology for analysing bird and mammal radio tracking data
- EU Commission proposals relating to unacceptable co-formulants
- a European Food Safety Authority opinion on residues in food for infants and young children

We also advised on authorisation of pesticide products, in particular, products containing the active substance metaldehyde. While we recognised the importance of this product to farmers, we advised that the data did not demonstrate that the product could be used without the risk of unacceptable environmental impacts. We also reviewed the first national authorisation of seven products containing active substances not previously authorised in the UK, including two biologicals.

We considered the authorisation of a biocidal product. The ECP was invited to adjudicate in a difference of views between HSE and a company regarding the efficacy of a biocidal product. Although biocides do not normally form part of the committee's work programme, we are happy to provide advice when requested to do so and where we possess relevant expertise.

We also spent time monitoring data and reviewing evidence. The committee kept an eye on the latest research related to risks associated with the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on pollinators. We concluded that this did not cause us to change our previous advice to government on this issue. We will continue to review any new evidence on neonicotinoids. We also considered:

- a report on pesticide application produced by the Pesticides Usage Survey Programme
- an assessment of information arising from the National Poisons Information Service on pesticide-related incidents
- the work and findings of the Pesticide Residues in Food's monitoring programme

We also focused on the future and meeting expectations. We considered how the committee could best provide appropriate support to government in preparation for EU exit. Members also discussed the future of pesticide regulation with civil society organisations. We will be having similar discussions with representatives of other sectors of the industry, including producers and users of pesticides. We considered the potential impact of the government's 25 year environment plan and review of the National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides, and how to ensure the most efficient handling of emergency authorisation applications.

ANNEX 1

Terms of Reference

Remit of the committee

1. The UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (the committee) is established to provide independent scientific advice on matters relating to the effective control of pests¹, including advice on approval and authorisation of pesticides.² In this work, the committee will take account of the general purposes of Part III of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 (FEPA) as set out in Section 16(1) of the act. These are:

- a. the continuous development of means:
 - i. to protect the health of people, creatures and plants
 - ii. to safeguard the environment; and
 - iii. to secure safe, efficient and humane methods of controlling pests.
- b. Making information about pesticides available to the public.

2. The Committee shall provide advice and recommendations to the Ministers listed below on any matter within its remit, either in response to a request or at the Committee's initiative. The Committee will normally provide its advice to the Assessors (provided for in paragraph 14 below) but may provide advice directly to all or any of the following Ministers (referred to collectively in this document as "the Ministers"): the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Secretary of State for Health, Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers and the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland.

1 'Pest' means any organism harmful to plants or to wood or other plant products, any undesired plant, and any harmful organism. This definition is not intended to place a strict limit on the committee's remit.

2 'Pesticide' means any substance, preparation or organism prepared or used for destroying or controlling any pest. It includes everything within the scope of Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market. This definition is not intended to place a strict limit on the committee's remit.

3. The Committee will be consulted on regulations relating to the general purposes of Part III of FEPA and falling within its remit which any or all of the Ministers contemplate making.

General provisions

4. The lead Defra Minister will set the Terms of Reference for the Committee in agreement with the Ministers. Any proposal to vary these Terms of Reference or abolish the Committee would also be subject to agreement by all the Ministers. In all these cases the Committee itself will be consulted; the Ministers will ultimately set the remit of the Committee, while the Committee will determine its ways of working.
5. The Ministers may receive: strategic work plans for particular areas of on-going work; reports and advice; and periodic reviews of the Committee's functions, public benefits and value for money.
6. The Committee will, as appropriate and within its remit:
 - Contribute to developing the evidence base, analysing and interpreting evidence and providing judgements on quality and relevance;
 - Support policy development and evaluation, including by undertaking risk assessment and assessing new regulations and proposals for deregulation;
 - Advise on the scope for specific projects and research;
 - Contribute to best practice advice and formal guidance; and
 - Help the response to emergency situations by providing expert advice and opinion.
7. The Committee will provide independent advice and operate in line with the Principles of Scientific Advice to government and the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees.
8. The Committee will make its scientific conclusions and recommendations available to the public and other interested parties in a way which aims to be comprehensive, clear and timely. The Committee will decide its own publication schedule.

9. Defra's Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) will maintain an oversight of the work of the Committee and will meet at least annually with its Chair. The Committee will contribute to Defra reports, publications or guidance as appropriate; this may include providing an annual summary of its work for inclusion in the Annual Report of Defra's Science Advisory Council.

Appointments and conduct of Members

10. The Chair and the Members of the Committee are independent appointments made through open competition, in line with OCPA guidelines on best practice for making public appointments. Appointments are made by the Senior Responsible Owner within Defra in agreement with: Department of Work and Pensions; Department of Health; Food Standards Agency; Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for Northern Ireland; Scottish Government; and the Welsh Ministers. These bodies will also agree the plans for each recruitment exercise.
11. Members are expected to act in accordance with the seven 'Nolan' principles of public life.

Working groups and additional expertise

12. Subject to the availability of funds, the Committee may: establish groups to support aspects of its work; and bring in additional expertise (from the UK or abroad) to advise on specific issues.



Advisors

13. Advisors are officials, from any of the UK administrations, with specialist expertise who can advise the Committee. At the time of establishment of the Committee, advisors are drawn from the Environment Agency, the Food Standards Agency, the Health and Safety Executive and Natural England. Any future additions to this list will be arranged by agreement between the Committee and the relevant Department or body. Advisors shall receive the meeting documents at the same time as Committee members and have the right to attend Committee meetings. They will contribute to discussions when invited to do so.

Assessors

14. Each of the following appoints one of their officials as an Assessor: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Department of Work and Pensions; Department of Health; Food Standards Agency; Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for Northern Ireland; Scottish Government; and the Welsh Ministers. Assessors receive and respond to the advice and recommendations supplied by the Committee to their Ministers. Where appropriate they are responsible for seeking the views of their Minister on the advice from the Committee. Assessors shall receive the meeting documents at the same time as Committee members and have the right to attend ECP meetings. They will contribute to discussions when invited to do so.

Department for the Environment

Food & Rural Affairs

May 2015



Annex 2

Members

(at 31 December 2018) and declarations of interest

Chairman

Professor William Cushley is Professor of Molecular Immunology at the University of Glasgow, where he also serves as Dean for Global Engagement for south and south-east Asia. His research interests are in B cell development in health and disease. He has served as chair of the board of trustee directors of the Babraham Institute in Cambridge and is the current chair of Health and Life Science review panels for the European Science Foundation. Bill was appointed to the ACP in 2014.

No interests declared.

Deputy Chairman

Professor Rod Blackshaw is a soil ecologist with a background in ecotoxicology and pest management. He has particular interests in the functioning of soils, and the management of soil pests by understanding their population dynamics and behaviours at different spatial scales through the application of mathematical and statistical models. Previous roles have included Director of the Regional Food Technology Transfer Centre and Centre for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability, both at Plymouth University, and farming on his own account. This is his fourth year on the committee and he assumed the role of deputy chairman at the beginning of 2018.

No interests declared.

Members

Professor Gary Bending is a Professor in Environmental Science in the School of Life Sciences at the University of Warwick. He specialises in understanding processes which control the fate of pesticides in the environment. This is his fifth year on the committee. Gary stepped down from the committee at the end of 2018.

Non-personal interests

- BBSRC-Syngenta CASE studentship
- Warwick collaborative postgraduate research scholarship co-funded with Syngenta CASE studentship
- NERC-Syngenta CASE studentship
- BBSRC-AstraZeneca CASE studentship

Ms Helen Chambers is an Occupational Hygienist in the Health and Safety Executive. She specialises in understanding human exposure to hazardous substances and management of the risks presented, in a wide range of workplaces. This is her third year on the committee.

No interests declared.

Mr Richard Davis is formerly Director of HSE's Chemicals Regulation Directorate, responsible for the authorisation of pesticides, biocides and chemicals in the UK. This included all the disciplines involved in the scientific risk assessment and regulatory operations for the UK regulatory organisation. Richard has extensive experience of participation in the EU regulatory environment and as Chair of the OECD Pesticides Working Group. He was previously Head of Efficacy Branch in Pesticides Safety Directorate and Head of Pesticide Usage Survey Group in Central Science Laboratory. He has spent 16 years in plant pathology research studying rational pesticide usage for pest and disease control in soft fruit, vegetables and agricultural field crops. He has extensive experience of pests, diseases and agronomy of horticultural and agricultural crops including both chemical and alternative control options. This is his seventh year on the committee.

No interests declared.

Ms Jennifer Dean is a barrister at Law, chair of Law at the British Computer Society, and Health and Safety Officer for hospitality branches at Unite. She is also an advisor and mediator at the legal clinic for Unite, and a consultant and mentor for young entrepreneurs on business, policy and legislation. She is the lay member for consumer affairs. This is her ninth year on the committee.

No interests declared.

Mr Mark Dempsey is the support services manager in Calderdale Council. He is a founder member of the Northern Amenity Forum, BASIS examiner and part time horticultural lecturer at Kirklees College. He is a Kew Gardens Mentor for the Grow Wild Project. He is a judge for the Keep Britain Tidy international Green Flag Award, the Blue Flag international quality beach award and Purple Flag award. He is the lay member for environmental issues. This is his third year on the committee.

No interests declared.

Dr Martin Hare is a Principal Lecturer in Agronomy at Harper Adams University, where he is Associate Head of the Crop and Environment Sciences Department and Chair of the Research Degrees Standards Committee. He is BASIS qualified and has over twenty years' research experience working with pesticides. This is his seventh year on the committee.

Non-personal interests

- Line management responsibility at Harper Adams University for a number of academic staff, who may at any time have research or research students funded by a range of funding bodies and commercial companies.

Professor Tom Hutchinson is an expert in the ecotoxicology and the risks posed by chemicals to freshwater and marine ecosystems. He is Professor of Environment and Health Sciences at the University of Plymouth. This is his sixth year on the committee.

Current personal interests

- University of Plymouth receives funding from a diverse range of organisations including BBSRC, Defra, Environment Agency, EPSRC, European Commission, Food and Environment Research Agency Ltd, Food Standards Agency, Government Office for Science, Marine Scotland, Natural England, NERC and other organisations.
- Commissioned by the Government Office for Science to contribute to an evidence review on marine pollution as part of the 'Futures of the Sea' project.
- Scientific consultancy to UK government (with payment).
- Marine Scotland: environmental risk assessment of aquaculture: Scientific advisory role (with payment).

Non-personal current interests

- Food and Environment Research Agency Limited – NERC Industrial CASE award for a cooperative PhD research studentship on fungal toxins in aquatic ecosystems.
- Fellow at the Linnean Society of London, Royal Society of Biology and Higher Education Academy.

[Supplemental information: relatives farming 200ha of land/employed by Swedish agricultural engineering company].

Professor Edward Lock is Industrial Professor of Toxicology at Liverpool John Moores University. His research interest is mechanism of target organ toxicity and mode of action of xenobiotic chemicals, and treatment of metabolic disorders of tyrosine catabolism. This is his seventh year on the committee.

Personal interests

- Consultancy to Syngenta for five days, with a fee.

Dr Ruth Mann is Head of Research at STRI and a Director of the Amenity Forum. Her broad research background is integrated disease management in agricultural and horticultural crops. Her current research interests include holistic management of all sport surfaces and amenity area. Ruth is also an approved trainer for BASIS Amenity Horticulture. This is her first year on the committee.

Non-personal interests

- Worked on an extension of authorisation for minor use for acelepryn in 2017, which was seen by the committee in 2018.
- STRI completes multiple trials for the pesticide industry internationally and is officially recognised as an efficacy testing organisation in the UK. She is responsible for the teams completing this work. STRI also provides consultancy services, including advice on pesticides to the sports turf industry.

Professor Damien McElvenny is a biostatistician and epidemiologist and is principal epidemiologist at the Institute of Occupational Medicine in Edinburgh. He is honorary associate professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Honorary Member of the Society of Occupational Medicine. He is a Director of Statistics Analysis and Health Limited. Damien's primary research interest is in using epidemiology to better understand the effect on health of people's work. This is his first year on the committee.

No interests declared.

Dr Chris Morris is a Senior Lecturer at the Medical Toxicology Centre at Newcastle University. He is also a member of the Dementia and Neurodegenerative Diseases Group and the Complex Genetics and Pharmacogenetics Research Group at the University. His research interests are in the causes of neurological disorders. This is his seventh year on the committee.

No interests declared.

Professor Richard Shore is a vertebrate ecotoxicologist and is the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology's (CEH) Science Area Head for Pollution. He is a senior researcher investigating the environmental impacts of contaminants, and has an honorary chair at Lancaster University. This is his seventh year on the committee.

Non-personal interests

- Project Leader of CEH's multi-funded Predatory Bird Monitoring Scheme. Funders vary annually but have included in recent years CEH (through its UK-SCAPE National Capability project), Natural England, the campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use, Scottish Natural Heritage, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Scottish Environment Protection Agency.
- Project leader for ongoing Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use-funded study run by CEH that monitors residues of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides in barn owls.
- Engagement with WILDCOMS Knowledge Exchange network that facilitates knowledge exchange between diverse stakeholders, which may include pesticide companies.
- Involved in work, supported under National Capability funding awarded to CEH, examining risk to non-target species from pesticides.
- Leader on a Defra-funded project examining development of chemical indicator metrics and the development of potential schemes for post-registration monitoring.
- Co-supervision of University of York student investigating exposure of wildlife to neonicotinoid pesticides.

Professor Andy Smith is Director of the Medical Research Council's (MRC) Toxicology Unit Integrative Toxicology Training Partnership based at the University of Leicester and Honorary Professor in Cancer Studies and Molecular Medicine. This is his seventh year on the committee.

No interests declared.

Dr Claire Stephenson is a senior managing scientist in the Centre for Chemical Regulation and Food Safety at Exponent International. She specialises in pesticide metabolism, residues in food, and dietary risk assessment. This is her first year on the committee.

Non-personal interests

- Employer is a scientific consultancy which undertakes work for a range of chemical companies in support of product approvals.

Dr Mike Whelan is a Reader in Environmental Science at the University of Leicester specialising in the environmental fate of organic chemicals, such as pesticides and pharmaceutical ingredients, and the transfer of nitrogen and phosphorus from agricultural land to surface waters. He has a PhD in Applied Hydrology from Leeds and did post-doctoral research in Exeter and Milan. Before joining the University of Leicester, he held academic posts at Stirling and Cranfield Universities, complemented by five years working in environmental modelling for Unilever. He has recently worked on and led a number of NERC, Defra, Environment Agency and industry-funded projects to better understand pollutant fate and transport. This is his first year on the committee.

No interests declared.

Dr Simon Wilkinson is a lecturer at the Medical Toxicology Centre, University of Newcastle upon Tyne. He researches into routes of exposure to harmful chemicals, especially dermal absorption and metabolism. This is his seventh year on the committee.

No interests declared.

The committee regularly reviews membership to ensure it has the right balance of expertise to meet the challenges it faces



ANNEX 3

Fees and reimbursement

Members of the ECP are not salaried staff but do receive a fee for attendance at meetings. They are not paid if they do not attend meetings, although they receive a preparation fee if they comment in writing.

Chair's fees

Attendance fee £180
Preparation fee £45

Deputy chair's fees and members' fees

Attendance fee £142
Preparation fee £36

The chair and members also receive reimbursement of reasonable actual travel and subsistence when attending meetings.

In 2018, the cost of members' fees related to committee work, a recruitment campaign, and venue hire for the open event and business meetings was approximately £40,000.

The ECP is assisted in the committee by the following officials:

Departmental assessors are officials who receive and respond to the advice and recommendations supplied by the committee to ministers on behalf of their department. Where appropriate they are responsible for seeking the views of their minister on the advice from the ECP.

Departmental assessors as at 31 December 2018

Mr Robin Foster Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Dr Stephen Jess Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute Northern Ireland (AFBNI), representing Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Ms Trudy Netherwood Department of Health

Dr Gillian Reay Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA), representing Scottish Government

Mr David Williams Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Mr Martin Williams Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)

Mr Mark Willis Food Standards Agency (FSA)

Departmental advisors are officials with specialist expertise who can advise the ECP.

Departmental advisors as at 31 December 2018

Ms Kären Clayton	HSE, CRD
Mr Adrian Dixon	HSE, CRD
Ms Carole Lowther	Defra
Mr Barry Maycock	FSA
Dr Helen Nakeeb	Public Health England
Dr Duncan Smith	HSE
Dr Chris Snaith	HSE, CRD
Ms Margaret Wade	HSE
Ms Holly Yates	Defra
Dr Susan Zappala	Natural England

ECP Secretariat

Secretary Grant Stark

ECP Secretariat

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ANNEX 4

Sub-groups

The ECP was assisted in its work by a number of sub-groups including: the Environmental Panel, the Medical and Toxicological Panel and the Working Party on Pesticide Usage Surveys. These sub-groups have not met for a number of years, but do consider papers by correspondence.

The Working Party on Pesticide Usage Surveys oversees delivery of the Pesticide Usage Survey Programme. Members are responsible for collecting and analysing pesticide usage data and preparing and publishing reports detailing findings on a range of crops and situations. The Working Party is Chaired by Julie Howarth (HSE). The members are:

- Bashir Surfraz (Fera Science Ltd)
- Gillian Reay (SASA)
- Stephen Jess (AFBINI)
- Faye Ritchie, Sacha White and Sarah Cook (all ADAS)
- Crop Protection Association (no representative)
- Peter Marsden (Drinking Water Inspectorate)

The Technical Secretary is Tracey Ware (HSE).



