From: [redacted]
Sent: 18 February 2013 13:24
To: PS/Owen Paterson (Secretariat); PS.Advisers (Secretariat)
Cc: PS/David Heath (Secretariat); PS/Richard Benyon (Secretariat); ps.demauley@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Subject: Syngenta - neonicotinoids - copy of letter sent to Commissioner Borg (DG SANCO) - for UK consideration ahead of SCoFCAH meeting 25th Feb

Dear Secretary of State,

Please find attached a letter from [redacted] which was sent to Commissioner Borg (DG SANCO) last week in which Syngenta asked him to retract the Commission's proposal to restrict the use of neonicotinoid technology.

We request that Defra consider this letter and associated documentation ahead of the SCoFCAH meeting on the 25th February at which member states will vote on the proposal.

New information now shows that EFSA's assessment of the risks posed to bee populations by this technology was based on unrealistic and excessive seed planting rates between two and four times higher than would be used under modern agricultural practice.

If EFSA had used normal sowing rates the amount of pesticide to which bees are exposed would been much lower and the Authority would have concluded that the risk is extremely low. Our view is that EFSA did the best job it could in the time it was given but – almost inevitably – there were flaws in the limited research it was able to carry out.

Given our detailed review of the data we challenge the proportionality of the current proposals put to member states by the European Commission.

As a major R&D company, investing over £250 million per year in the UK, we believe that a robust, proportionate, and well evidenced regulatory framework is essential if we are to successfully develop future agricultural

technologies in Europe. The proposed action promoted by the Commission, based on a flawed and incomplete technical assessment, moves in the opposite direction.

I have also copied your Ministerial colleagues on this email for reference.

Do not hesitate to contact me should you or your team have further questions. A confirmation of this email and its attachment being received would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]
Syngenta
Jealott's Hill International Research Centre
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21 February 2013

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DEFRA
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
LONDON SW1P 3JR

Dear Secretary of State

New doubt about EFSA conclusions on pesticide risk to bees

We have obtained documents from the European Food Safety Agency, under the EU Transparency Regulation, which raise significant concerns about the way the Agency drafted and communicated the conclusions of their review of the alleged risk to bees from neonicotinoid pesticides.

As you know, the three compounds – clothianidin, imidacloprid, and thiamethoxam – were reviewed individually but EFSA chose to report common conclusions through its media release of January 16 2013. Importantly, these common conclusions formed the basis of the European Commission's disproportionate proposal to restrict the use of all three neonicotinoid pesticides.

The documents we have obtained show that EFSA was fully aware prior to publication that the communication of these common conclusions would misrepresent their own findings. In particular, the technical experts made clear that they had not determined a risk to bees from residues of thiamethoxam in pollen and nectar.

The documents also show that an alternative media release was drafted to more accurately reflect the review conclusions but, for reasons which are unclear, they were overruled by the Director General of EFSA, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, and it went unpublished.

We urgently need to know why the concerns of the EFSA experts were ignored and the extent to which they were discussed with the European Commission before the inaccurate conclusions were published.

We have also established that EFSA's review contains serious flaws and is unreliable. It was certainly rushed and overestimated by a factor of 2 -4 times the amount of pesticide to which bees are exposed leading to the wrong risk calculation. In addition, the review ignored key studies and solid independent field monitoring which shows that neonicotinoid technology has been used safely for over a decade.

It is difficult to imagine how so many errors and omissions could have come about or why the Agency would decide to publicise its review with a press release that knowingly misrepresented their own findings. EFSA must have been aware that this communication would be inflammatory and guaranteed to provoke a negative reaction towards this valuable and important technology.

In order to maintain the integrity of the EU's decision making process, this must now be fully investigated. I would therefore ask you to insist that the Commission makes no further proposal for action on the EFSA review until such an investigation is completed.

The consequence of not doing this is that one of the most innovative crop protection technologies available may be banned damaging the interests of your farmers, and the economy, and do nothing to improve bee health.

If you would like to discuss this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely