

UK Expert Committee on Pesticides Annual Report 2015

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



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Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Nobel House,
17 Smith Square, London SW1 3JR

Telephone: 03459 33 55 77 Website: www.gov.uk/defra

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

Chair's Foreword

It's my pleasure to present this annual report of the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP).

The ECP is a new body, having been established in Spring 2015, succeeding the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP). The role of the ECP is broadly similar to that of its predecessor – providing advice to Government and the Devolved Administrations on matters related to the authorisation and use of pesticides. Experts who were members of the ACP were appointed to serve on the new Committee.

Some of the work we undertook early this year was designed to ensure the new Committee operates as effectively as it can. We ensured that our Terms of Reference and Members Code of Practice were updated. We also undertook an exercise to identify what the ACP did well and where there was scope for improvement in the way the new Committee would work.

One area where there is scope to improve our effectiveness is by working more closely with other independent scientific committees. I meet regularly, particularly with the Chairs, of other committees and it is clear that there is scope for more joined up working. ECP will be doing more of this in the future.



A particularly interesting feature of our work this year has been hearing from representatives of the Government's and Assemblies of the different countries of the UK. Whilst they identified many common issues/views (in particular concern at the move towards

a more hazard-based regulatory regime and the importance of having access to the ECPs expertise) the process has highlighted that there will be times that different countries may have different views on some issues. This is something the Committee will take into account in forming its advice.

ECP will continue to work to ensure that people and the environment are not exposed to an unacceptable degree of risk from pesticide use, whilst helping society derive the benefits that result from responsible use of these chemicals. It is important that our advice is robust and based on the latest information - we will continue to take account of all relevant scientifically-persuasive evidence in forming our views, whatever the source.

I would like to thank all those who helped, firstly the ACP and then, the ECP fulfil their remit. In particular, Committee Members, Advisors and Assessors who ensure full and frank discussion of the issues of the day and display immense understanding and expertise of difficult and complicated issues.

Thanks also go to representatives from industry bodies who attended some of our meetings to be questioned on issues associated with the authorisation of pesticide products – we appreciate the time they made available to us and honesty in answering our searching questions. This experience, and the engagement with organisations with an interest in pesticides at our successful Open Meeting, has helped to improve our understanding of the context in which we operate and we will do more of this.

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 and/or our activities please contact our Secretariat whose contact details can be found on page 20.



Professor **William Cushley**
Chairman, UK Expert Committee on Pesticides

Role of the Committee

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 I.

A list of our Members can be found at Annex II. 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 members appointed to consider issues from a public perspective. We also include those with practical experience of pesticide use in the farming and amenity sectors amongst our numbers.

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. At our meetings we declare and describe any potential conflict of interest.



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

Our work in 2015

Day-to-day work regulating pesticides is conducted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Those who wish to place pesticides products on the market must obtain an authorisation to do so. Authorisations are granted by the HSE following careful evaluation of data demonstrating that use of the product will not harm human health or have unacceptable effects on the environment. Legally enforceable restrictions are placed on the way products must be used (for example, amount applied, timing of application, need for operators to wear protective clothing, etc) to ensure safety. These restrictions are derived from an EU-based regime for controlling pesticides.



The ECP sees a small proportion of the work undertaken by HSE, generally the more difficult and novel casework. Each year we undertake an exercise to 'quality assure' the 'routine' HSE casework. Our 2015 assessment will conclude in early 2016.

Scientific understanding and technology are advancing continually and it is important that the regime for regulating pesticides responds to this. The Experts on the ECP help Government to determine how the range of controls on the authorisation and use of pesticides should deal with any emerging issues. We also have to recognise that science does not always deliver conclusive answers to every question, so we also provide

advice that enables Government to make informed, evidenced, science-based decisions on, for example, complex or novel uses of pesticides.



Our work this year has been extremely varied. Perhaps the most important and high-profile activity has related to providing advice on applications for emergency authorisations of pesticide products. We anticipated being asked for advice on emergency authorisations in 2015, so at the beginning of the year took some time to understand the legal and policy issues associated with this type of authorisation. Regulators can consider granting emergency authorisations for the short-term use of pesticides only when very specific conditions exist. We provide advice as to whether the criteria that would enable an authorisation to be granted are met.

Our most high-profile case concerned an application for use of neonicotinoid pesticides on oilseed rape crops. We understood that this was a controversial issue and that whatever we recommended, this would not meet with universal approval. However, following careful consideration of all the facts we advised that an authorisation could be granted subject to certain rigorous conditions being met which included limiting the area where the pesticide could be used, only allowing the use if there was evidence of the pest being present in significant numbers, and asking that information on the use of the pesticides could be returned for scientific scrutiny. This advice formed part of information used by Ministers, who decided to allow this use based on these specific controls.

The nature of an emergency means that our advice may be required at short notice. In 2015 the emergence of an invasive pest (the Spotted Wing Drosophila which is a serious pest on soft fruits) required the Committee to provide urgent advice to regulators as to whether the criteria for an emergency authorisation were fulfilled. We concluded that they were, noting that an entire seasons crop might have been affected. As a result of the



emergency pest control being made available, substantial damage to important fruit crops was avoided.

The impact of pesticide use on pollinator health is a key area of our work and Government looks to us for independent advice on this complex and evolving issue. This year we established a procedure to review new evidence/studies on this issue regularly, to ensure that the Committee's advice to Government would be based on an up-to-date assessment of the weight of evidence. We critically review the detail of new evidence/studies, looking behind the headlines to establish what (in scientific and technical terms) they add to our understanding of this issue.

We also consider the impact of pesticide use on human health by reviewing data from a range of human health monitoring programmes. The findings are re-assuring and consistent with previous years - the vast majority of reports are considered minor or asymptomatic. The reports did highlight a potential reaction to a new active substance which regulators will be watching for in future monitoring.

We have provided advice to regulators on issues related to the authorisation of a number of specific pesticide products, including those containing: chlorpyrifos (where a major revision to how much chlorpyrifos a person could be exposed to resulted in a substantial change to how and where this product can be used); chlorpropham (where there is a need to understand why we are detecting greater-than-expected variability of residues in stored potatoes); metaldehyde (how to mitigate risks to wildlife associated with the use of products containing this pesticide); and nematicide products (the use of which is partially being controlled by an excellent industry-led product stewardship initiative).



We considered a range of other matters, including:

- A review of stewardship practice, both for plant protection and rodenticide products.
- R&D 'needs' for pesticides.
- The authorisation of a relatively small number of novel pesticide products authorisations.
- A proposed update to the UK National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides.
- Progress to develop a definition of an 'endocrine disruptor' (a chemical which can disrupt the bodies hormone balance), for use as a hazard trigger in regulating pesticides.
- Reports from the UK pesticide usage survey programme.
- The Report of the International Agency for Research on Cancer's on glyphosate.

ANNEX I

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 pesticides². 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 and Rural Development 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 Adviser (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 [OCA 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 and Rural Development 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.

Advisers

13. Advisers are officials, from any of the UK administrations, with specialist expertise who can advise the Committee. At the time of establishment of the Committee, advisers 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. Advisers 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 and Rural

Development 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 II

Members

(at 31 December 2015) and declarations of interest

Chairman

Professor William Cushley is Professor of Molecular Immunology at the University of Glasgow. His research interests are in B cell development in health and disease. He has wide experience of scientific bodies having lately been Chair of the Board of Trustee Directors of the Babraham Institute in Cambridge. He is also currently Chair of Health & Life Science review Panels for the European Science Foundation. Bill was appointed to the ACP in 2014.

No interests to declare.

Members

Prof 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 third year on the Committee.

Non-personal non-current interests:

- PhD studentships; Syngenta providing stipend uplift and a top-up for consumables, travel and subsistence
 - NERC Open CASE award funding (2011-2015).

Non-personal current interests:

- PhD studentships; Syngenta providing stipend uplift and a top-up for consumables, travel and subsistence
 - BBSRC Industrial CASE award (2013-2017); and
 - Warwick University-Syngenta CASE award (2015-2019).
- Member of research team for project co-funded by Defra and Lonza evaluating the potential of constructed wetland features for mitigating the impact of pesticide losses from agricultural land (2013-2016).

Professor Rod Blackshaw was recently the Director of the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability at Plymouth University. He has extensive experience working as an applied entomologist and soil ecotoxicology. His research interests predominantly lie in integrated pest management and soil zoology. This is his second year on the Committee.

Non-personal non-current interest:

- Dartmoor National Park. Independent person.

Mr Richard Davis is a retired Director of HSEs Chemicals Regulation Directorate, and a graduate in plant pathology. This is his fourth year on the Committee.

No interests to declare.

Ms Jennifer Dean is a barrister, and is the lay member for consumer affairs. This is her sixth year on the Committee.

No interests to declare.

Mr Derek Finnegan provides advice to the Committee on pesticide chemistry and residues. This is his fourth year on the Committee.

No interests to declare.

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 fourth year on the Committee.

Non personal current interests:

- Co-supervisor of one PhD student with funding from Syngenta;
- Line management responsibility at Harper Adams University for a number of academic staff who have research and/or research students funded by a range of funding bodies and commercial companies; and
- Course trainer on BASIS (Registration) Ltd courses at Harper Adams University. Trainees come from a range of backgrounds but are usually agronomists or farmers.

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 third year on the Committee.

Current personal interests:

- University of Plymouth receives funding from BBSRC, DECC, Defra, Environment Agency, EPSRC, European Commission, Food and Environment Research Agency Ltd., Food Standards Agency, Natural England and NERC for a wide range of research projects;
- Defra – Personal appointment as Science Leader for UK-Japan Research Collaboration on Endocrine Disrupters in the Aquatic Environment (funded via CEFAS project C5046 from 1 October 2013 to 31 March 2015). Scientific consultancy (with payment);
- ECETOC (European Centre for the Ecotoxicology & Toxicology of Chemicals) - Invited to participate in the review of research proposals to the European Chemicals Industry (CEFIC-LRi) (without payment);
- Invited to attend March 2016 HESI (Health & Environmental Sciences Institute) workshop on Whole Effluent Assessment hosted by L'Oréal Limited (without payment);
- Invited workshop speaker at Regulatory Science Associates Ltd (RSA Ltd) January 2015 conference (without payment).

Non personal current interests:

- Food and Environment Research Agency Limited, York - NERC Industrial CASE award for a cooperative PhD research studentship on fungal toxins in aquatic ecosystems;
- Brunel University - Honorary Chair;
- University of Exeter - Honorary Chair;
- Plymouth Marine Laboratory - Honorary Fellow.

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

Mr Philip Jackson is a self-employed health and safety consultant, and is the ECP lay member for environmental issues. This is his sixth year on the Committee.

No interests to declare.

Professor Edward Lock is Industrial Professor of Toxicology at Liverpool John Moores University. This is his fourth year on the Committee.

No interests to declare.

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 fourth year on the Committee.

No interests to declare.

Professor Keith Palmer is Professor of Occupational Medicine with the University of Southampton. His areas of special interest include the causes, clinical management and prevention of illnesses associated with work. This is his fourth year on the Committee.

No interests to declare.

Professor Richard Shore is a vertebrate ecotoxicologist and Head of Site at the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH) at Lancaster. He is a senior researcher investigating the environmental impacts of contaminants, and has an Honorary Chair at Lancaster University. This is his fourth year on the Committee.

Non-personal current interests:

- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Natural England, Defra, Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use. Project Leader of the CEH's multi-funded Predatory Bird Monitoring Scheme;
- Multiple stakeholders which may include pesticide companies attending ad hoc network meetings. Engagement with "WILDCOMS" Knowledge Exchange network that facilitates knowledge exchange between diverse stakeholders, which may include pesticide companies;
- FMC Corporation. Member of Expert Panel on field monitoring to assess potential for pesticide bioaccumulation; and
- Member of project board of a Bayer and Syngenta funded CEH project investigating the exposure and effects of pollinators 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 fourth year on the Committee.

Current personal interests:

- Expert member of CEF panel and Working groups none dealing with pesticides or plant protection.

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 fourth year on the Committee.

No interests to declare.



The Committee currently has two vacancies, for occupational and dietary exposure. Our lay members are also approaching the end of their appointed period of tenure. A recruitment exercise was underway at December 2015 to fill these posts.

ANNEX III

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.

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

Departmental assessors are officials who receive and respond to the advice/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 2015

Mr David Williams	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Mr Robin Foster	Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
Dr Jackie Hughes	Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA)
Dr Paul Holley	Department of Health
Ms Sarah Hardy	Food Standards Agency (FSA)
Mr Martin Williams	Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)
Dr Stephen Jess	Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute Northern Ireland (AFBINI)

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

Departmental advisers as at 31 December 2015

Dr Morwenna Carrington	Defra
Mr Mark Wilson	Defra
Mr Dave Bench	HSE, CRD
Miss Sarah Shore	HSE, CRD
Dr Steve Fairhurst	HSE, CRD
Mr Adrian Dixon	HSE, CRD
Dr Chris Snaith	HSE
Ms Margaret Wade	HSE
Mr Barry Maycock	FSA
Dr Paul Whitehouse	Environment Agency
Dr Susan Zappala	Natural England

ECP Secretariat

Secretary
Grant Stark

ECP Secretariat

Ground Floor
Mallard House
Kings Pool
York YO1 7PX

Tel: 01904 455983

Email: ecp@hse.gov.uk

ANNEX IV

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. The ECP is considering reconstituting the Environmental and the Medical and Toxicological Panels, subject to identifying a suitable work program, terms of reference, resourcing and membership.

The Working Party on Pesticide Usage Surveys oversees delivery of the Pesticide Usage Survey Programme. Members are responsible for collecting and analysing pesticide sales and 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 Dave Garthwaite (Fera Science Ltd), Jackie Hughes (SASA), Stephen Jess (AFBINI), Mike Lole, Peter Gladders and Sarah Cook (all ADAS), Liz Turner (Crop Protection Association) and Peter Marsden (Drinking Water Inspectorate) and the Technical Secretary is Tracey Ware (HSE).