

Beekeepers and farmers cultivating areas with agricultural crops must register in the new notification system for spraying of the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA)

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Issue 101 of the State Gazette of 27.11.2020 promulgates an Ordinance amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 13 of 2016 on the measures for the protection of bees and bee colonies from poisoning and the methods for carrying out plant protection, disinfection and disinsection activities. The promulgation of this ordinance introduces the use of an Electronic Platform (EPORD), in which, by 31 January 2021, all beekeepers and farmers cultivating areas with agricultural crops must register.

The platform will be maintained by the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) and is intended to notify beekeepers of forthcoming treatments. Registration and use of the platform is free of charge for all users. A mandatory requirement is that each of them has a valid e-mail address.

Electronic Platform of the BFSA for notification of plant protection, disinfection and disinsection activities (EPORD).

Pursuant to the promulgated amendments, the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency shall establish and maintain an electronic platform for notification of plant protection, disinfection and disinsection activities (EPORD). Access to EPORD is granted after registration of the user with a valid e-mail address, and the registration and access to EPORD are free of charge for its users.

EPORD contains geographical information on the current boundaries of the “Physical Blocks” layer from the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS), the planned and carried out plant protection, disinfection and disinsection activities, and the entered locations of livestock holdings (apiaries). The updating of the “Physical Blocks” layer from LPIS in EPORD shall be carried out within 1 month from the approval of the final “Physical Blocks” layer for the respective year under the procedure of Article 16b of Ordinance No. 105 of 2006 on the conditions and procedure for the establishment, maintenance, access to and use of the Integrated Administration and Control System.

Mandatory registration in EPORD for all beekeepers and farmers cultivating areas with agricultural crops, by 31 January 2021

By 31 January 2021, all beekeepers and farmers cultivating areas with agricultural crops must register in the Electronic Platform for Notification of Plant Protection, Disinfection and Disinsection Activities (EPORD). This is envisaged in the Ordinance amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 13 of 2016 on the measures for the protection of bees and bee colonies from poisoning and the methods for carrying out plant protection, disinfection and disinsection activities. The platform is maintained by the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) and is intended to notify beekeepers of forthcoming treatments. Registration and use of the platform is free of charge for all users. A mandatory requirement is that each of them has a valid e-mail address.

Beekeepers will have to enter the GPS coordinates of the apiary themselves. This will be done easily with the help of geolocation via a mobile phone and entering the data into the system. In the event of treatments in the period up to 28 February 2021, notification will be carried out under the existing procedure – personally, through

the mayor of the settlement, who announces and disseminates the information through local mass media and through the new electronic platform.

As of 1 March 2021, notification will be carried out only through the Electronic Platform. In the period from 15 March to 31 May, on public holidays and non-working days, mobile inspectors and staff from the Regional Food Safety Directorates (RFSDs) shall be made available from 8:00 to 18:00 hours for receiving alerts and carrying out inspections, thereby increasing the effectiveness of official control. An amendment has also been made to the mechanism for notification by beekeepers in the event of bee mortality or signs of bee poisoning. The complaint shall be submitted to the Director of the Regional Directorate "Agriculture" immediately by telephone, not later than the first day after the established mortality. The procedure for sampling bees and vegetation has also been changed. Samples shall be taken by members of the commission which is formed upon receipt of an alert for bee mortality. In the presence of pesticide residues in samples from bees, the analyses of the plant samples shall be carried out at the expense of the BFSA.