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Limited and controlled use of neonicotinoid plant protection products in Bulgaria

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The Bulgarian Food Safety Agency has issued an opinion regarding the controlled and restricted use of the pesticides clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam on the territory of the country. With a view to enhanced control over the implementation of the measures for reducing the risk to bees, the BFSA envisages the carrying out of unannounced inspections of farmers by plant protection inspectors from the Regional Food Safety Directorates during the period of seed treatment and sowing of maize and sunflower.

The Plant Protection Products Council, **by minutes of the meeting of the PPPC held on 20 March 2017**, on the grounds of Art. 62, para. 1 of the Plant Protection Act, authorised the placing on the market of three products for limited and controlled use in 2017 for seed treatment. The plant protection products containing the active substances – clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam, considered harmful to bees in accordance with the

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requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009, were authorised subject to certain restrictions and risk mitigation measures, namely:

1. Designated areas in which these products will be used: Varna, Veliko Tarnovo, Vidin, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Dobrich, Lovech, Montana, Pleven, Plovdiv, Razgrad, Ruse, Silistra, Sofia Region, Targovishte and Shumen;

2. Placement of notification signs on the areas sown with seeds treated with the two authorised neonicotinoid products.

3. Seeds treated with these products shall not be sown where there is active bee foraging. Beehives shall be moved or covered during treatment and during sowing.

4. During sowing, equipment with appropriate devices shall be used to ensure complete incorporation of the seeds into the soil and to minimise the drift of the product from the seeds during sowing.

5. Seeds treated with neonicotinoid products must be fully incorporated into the soil in order to protect birds/wild mammals.

6. Spilled/scattered quantities of treated seeds shall be removed in order to protect wild birds/wild mammals.

7. Water shall not be contaminated with these plant protection products or their packaging.

8. Seed treatment shall be carried out only in professionally equipped seed treatment facilities. In these facilities, best techniques shall be used to achieve maximum limitation of dust emission during application to seeds, storage and transport.

9. On the grounds of Art. 63, para. 3 of the Plant Protection Act, within 14 days after the expiry of the authorisation period of the products, the persons who have placed these products on the market shall notify the Central Administration of the BFSA of the quantities placed on the market and of the unsold quantities of the respective plant protection products and shall provide a complete list of the farmers – end users of the products.

10. Farmers are obliged to notify the respective Regional Food Safety Directorates of the location and size of the areas sown with treated seeds within ten days after the sowing of the seeds.

11. On the grounds of Art. 112 of the Plant Protection Act, persons who use plant protection products shall personally notify the owners of bee colonies located in the land of the mayoralty where the areas to be treated are situated, as well as the owners of bee colonies located in the neighbouring lands, of the date and time at which each application of the plant protection product will be carried out.

The decision for limited and controlled use of neonicotinoid plant protection products in Bulgaria is prompted by the expert assessment of the National Grain Producers Association, the Association of Agricultural Producers in Bulgaria, the N. Poushkarov Institute of Soil Science, Agrotechnology and Plant Protection, the Dobrudzha Agricultural Institute – General Toshevo, and the Maize Research Institute – Kneja. In relation to maintaining

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good plant condition and reducing the damage caused by two economically important pests in maize and sunflower – the grey corn weevil and wireworms, limited and controlled use is introduced for plant protection products containing neonicotinoid compounds.

Source: Bulgarian Food Safety Agency

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