

To the attention of agricultural producers

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Information from the Ministry of Agriculture and BFSA on the restricted and controlled use of neonicotinoid plant protection products

In connection with the implementation of Commission Regulation (EU) No 485/2013 of 24 May 2013 and Commission Regulation (EU) No 781/2013 of 14 August 2013 regarding the conditions for approval of the active substances clothianidin, thiamethoxam, imidacloprid and fipronil and the prohibition of the placing on the market and use of seeds treated with plant protection products (PPP) containing the specified active substances, a total of eight PPPs for seed treatment were withdrawn from use in Bulgaria. Agricultural producers of crops of major importance for the country – maize and sunflower – were deprived of seed treatment products against economically important pests in these crops – wireworms and the grey corn weevil.

On this basis, a sectoral organisation of farmers officially requested authorisation for the placing on the market of PPPs for restricted and controlled use on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria for seed treatment against pests in maize and sunflower. Given the possibilities of agrotechnical methods and the biology of the **grey corn weevil and wireworms**, seed treatment remains the only option for effective control of these pests in both crops!

In view of the opinion of the Directorate “Plant Protection and Control” of the Central Administration of the BFSA, the real risk of crop failure in fields with an established medium and high degree of infestation by soil pests, the lack of alternative methods for pest control and on the grounds of Art. 62, para. 1 of the Plant Protection Act, the Commission on Plant Protection Products (CPPP) authorised the placing on the market of two products for seed treatment for restricted and controlled use. On the basis of the decision of the CPPP, two orders were issued: for the authorisation of a product with the active substance imidacloprid and a product with the active substance thiamethoxam, for placing on the market for restricted and controlled use on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. In accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009, the products were authorised with specific restrictions and risk mitigation measures, namely:

1. The regions in which these products will be used are indicated: Burgas, Varna, Veliko Tarnovo, Vidin, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Dobrich, Montana, Pazardzhik, Pernik, Pleven, Plovdiv, Sliven, Sofia, Stara Zagora, Lovech, Haskovo, Razgrad, Targovishte, Ruse, Silistra, Shumen and Yambol. In these regions, a medium and high degree of infestation by grey corn weevil and wireworms has been established in maize and sunflower areas;
2. Placement of information boards in fields 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 completely 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 by qualified specialists, with the least possible risk to the environment.
9. On the grounds of Art. 63, para. 3 of the Plant Protection Act, persons who have placed these products on the market shall, within 14 days after the expiry of the authorisation period, notify the Central Administration of the BFSA of the quantities of the respective PPPs placed on the market and not realised.