



# Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

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Sir Robert Goodwill  
Environment, Food and Rural  
Affairs Committee House of  
Commons SW1A 0AA

23 October 2023

Dear Sir Robert,

I am writing to inform you that Defra laid the Plant Protection Products (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2023 under the affirmative procedure on 23 October 2023.

Effectively managing pests, weeds and diseases is crucial for crop yield and quality – which in turn supports food security and a thriving rural economy. The changes made by this instrument will ensure our farmers and growers have access to the products they need to produce food successfully and affordably, thereby supporting Defra's priorities of increasing the sustainability, productivity and resilience of the agriculture sector.

The purpose of this instrument is to ensure continued access in Great Britain (GB) to certain plant protection products ("PPPs", referred to simply as pesticides) imported from the EU or EEA. This instrument uses powers in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 to revoke and replace certain parts of secondary retained EU legislation relating to the marketing, sale and use of pesticides in GB. The legislation seeks to:

- i. extend post-EU transitional arrangements for **import of seeds** treated with pesticides (authorised by at least one EU or EEA Member State) by 3.5 years until July 2027;
- ii. introduce measures to enable the reinstatement of certain permits for the import of **parallel trade** products from EU or EEA countries into GB for a maximum of two years. This will be limited to those who held a permit when the transition period ended.

## Treated seed imports

Under post EU-exit transition arrangements, seeds treated with pesticides not authorised for that use in GB but authorised in at least one EU/EEA member state, could be imported for use in GB until the end of December 2023.

This SI will avoid the unintended consequences of no longer having access to EU- authorised seed treatments, which is likely to impact the quality and yield of certain crops – particularly in the maize sector. Around 99% of maize crops (worth £550m annually) use at least one of the products that will no longer be available if current transitional arrangements were to end. Maize is the primary fodder crop for cattle, and is also used in anaerobic digestion.

These temporary measures are designed to provide manufacturers sufficient time to submit applications for full pesticide authorisations for seed treatments – both for existing and new products in GB, to avoid this situation arising again. Further, farmers and growers will have the time to adapt and consider the use of alternative methods, as part of an Integrated Pest Management approach (IPM). We are already supporting farmers to increase their use of IPM – including through new paid actions in the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme, announced this year. These measures will ensure they continue to have access to existing effective crop protection methods, including important pesticide products, while more enduring solutions are developed for the future.

The import of treated seeds will be restricted to products authorised in one or more EU countries. This means that they must have passed through a strict regulatory regime with similar high standards to GB to be imported and used in this country. Any products for which the authorisation is withdrawn in the EU will no longer be legal to import and use in GB.

### **Parallel Trade**

Parallel Trade Permits (PTPs) allowed the import from EU/EEA countries of pesticide products that were identical to GB-authorized products (the “reference product”). Parallel permits expired at the end of December 2022, but existing stocks could be sold until end of June 2023 and can be used until the end of June 2024. We expect the end of these provisions may have a severe impact on certain key agricultural sectors.

This instrument will ensure farmers have access to cost-effective pesticide products at a time of increased financial pressure due to global events. This intervention may lead to some sectors spending on average 18% less for certain products (with an estimated total cost saving of £3.8m a year across the farming/growing sector).

As with any policy on pesticides, maintaining protections for the environment and human health is paramount. With regards to the parallel trade scheme, imported products must be identical to the GB reference product. We will continue to use both intelligence-led investigation and a broad range of controls, including the annual formulation survey as a way of monitoring, identifying and taking action on any products that do not meet regulatory standards. This is in line with current enforcement practice.

I trust this will give you satisfactory assurances on the nature of this instrument. However, should you or EFRA Committee colleagues have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Rt. Hon. Mark Spencer MP**