

Dear friend,

Thank you for your email regarding the use of neonicotinoid pesticides and their potential impact on pollinators, such as bees.

I am pleased to inform you that the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, of which I am a member, has now voted down the objection to ban neonicotinoid pesticides (clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam). This means that neonicotinoid pesticides will remain banned in the EU, including the UK. This is good news for bees and other pollinators.

I received close to 10 000 emails on the matter and I would like to thank each concerned citizen for expressing their understanding of the necessity of pollinators.

Support for the Commission's proposed ban on these three substances is an important step towards ensuring a healthy environment for bees and other pollinators, and I, along with colleagues in the European Parliamentary Labour Party and the wider Socialists & Democrats group, voted to keep the neonicotinoids ban in place .

The final decision regarding the ban will ultimately be taken by the member states if the EU in the Standing Committee.

The decline of bees across the world is a cause for great environmental concern and in the UK populations have fallen by 30% since 2007. Although it is likely that this is due to a combination of factors, numerous studies have linked this decline to the use of neonicotinoid pesticides. Neonicotinoid pesticides pose an acute risk to honeybee health, as the research conducted by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in 2013 found. As approximately 75% of crops rely on insects for pollination, the protection of pollinator populations is hugely important to ensure the long-term viability of the food chain.

I am aware of the many pressures faced by farmers and their concerns that plant protection products are being increasingly restricted. However studies have shown that neonicotinoids do not increase crop yields. I would, therefore, like to see a commitment across the EU into further research to identify suitable substitutes such as Integrated Pest management measures which some already voluntarily implement, and which would benefit the farming community but would not pose a risk to the environment, human or animal life.

I hope you have found this information helpful, but please let me know if you have any further questions.

Kind regards,

Paul Brannen MEP

North East England

Labour's Agriculture Spokesperson in the European Parliament