



nature's voice

Lord de Mauley
Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
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19 April 2013

Dee Minister,

Neonicotinoid insecticides

The RSPB would very much like to meet you to discuss a range of issues across your portfolio where we have an interest. These include climate change mitigation and adaptation; agricultural and forestry policy; the green economy and scientific research.

Currently, a key interest to us is the use of neonicotinoid insecticides and their impact on pollinators, particularly bumblebee populations. I am aware that the UK abstained from voting on the European Commission's proposed moratorium on neonicotinoids because Ministers were awaiting the results of the FERA (Food & Environment Research Agency) field trials. These results have now been published but are far from conclusive. Consequently, I would like to bring the RSPB's position and our critique of the FERA report to your attention (attached).

In light of this, I would urge you to ensure that this research is not used in the UK or presented to the European Commission and EU Member States as evidence of no or limited impact in discussions over whether to impose a moratorium on certain neonicotinoids. The RSPB strongly supports the Environmental Audit Committee's conclusion that, *"Where the available scientific evidence is either incomplete or contradictory, Defra must apply the precautionary principle rather than maintaining the status quo while waiting for further evidence"* and ask that action is now

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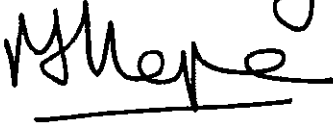
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initiated at UK level. We strongly welcome the review of UK authorised neonicotinoid products recently announced by the Chemicals Regulation Directorate.

I would very much welcome a meeting with you to discuss further the RSPB's concerns regarding neonicotinoids and possible future research needs, but also a range of other issues. We would be more than happy to meet you in London at your office, but we could also meet at the RSPB's conventional arable farm in Cambridgeshire where we have significant experience of agrochemical use. Over the past decade, we have managed to triple the number of farmland birds through smart use of environmental stewardship whilst also increasing wheat yields.

Yours sincerely,


Martin Harper
Conservation Director