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Our ref: PO276034/UR

[REDACTED]
National Farmers Union
King's Building
16 Smith Square
London
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27 June 2012

From Richard Benyon MP

Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries

Dear [REDACTED],

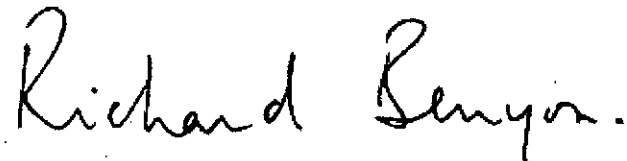
Thank you for forwarding a copy of [REDACTED] letter of 15 June to Commissioner Dalli and his Chef de Cabinet and to Commissioner Ciolos about the French Government's proposal that the European Commission should take EU action to ban the use of neonicotinoid seed treatments.

The studies to which you refer are currently under detailed review in the UK. We are of course aware of the French national action and their request for the European Commission to take a similar course, and are examining the limited information we have on the basis for their action as part of our review. We are also examining the statement made by EFSA on Henry *et al* and other new studies.

We understand that the Commission themselves have not yet decided how to react to the French request and we will decide our position in light of both our review of the evidence and the detail of any proposal that the Commission may make. It is however clear that in the case of seed treatments, such as Cruiser OSR, EU plant protection products law does not allow Member States to prohibit marketing and use of seeds treated with pesticides authorised for that use in at least one Member State.

The UK is also contributing actively to a broader review by EFSA of the bee risk assessments for all neonicotinoid insecticides, and we will also continue to support research and work with regulators and scientists internationally to continue to develop our understanding of risks to bees and other pollinators.

Bees are valued in their own right and for the economic benefits they bring as pollinators and we take the success of bee populations very seriously. This is why we carefully assess new studies as they emerge, and consider with an open mind whether they alter the overall picture. The UK's assessment of the body of evidence assembled before the latest studies was that it supported the conclusion that neonicotinoids do not threaten honey bee populations. However we will continue to develop and assess the science and will act if new evidence, including these latest scientific studies currently under review, shows the need.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Benyon." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

RICHARD BENYON MP