

UK Expert Committee on Pesticides Annual Report 2016

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Health and Safety Executive



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Contents

- 3.....**Chairman's Foreword
- 5.....**Role of the Committee
- 10...**Annex I - Terms of Reference
- 14...**Annex II - Members
- 19...**Annex III - Fees and reimbursement
- 21...**Annex IV - Sub-groups

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This document is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/expert-committee-on-pesticides>

Chair's Foreword

It's my pleasure to present the 2016 Annual Report of the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP). The ECP provides advice to the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations on matters related to the authorisation and use of pesticides.

You will see from this Report that 2016 was another interesting and busy year for the Committee. I would like to thank all those who helped the ECP fulfil its remit - in particular, Committee Members, Advisors and Assessors who fully and frankly discuss matters and display great understanding and expertise of difficult and complicated issues.

2016 was, in part, characterised by greater interaction with those who have an interest in pesticide use. This includes those we invited to attend our meetings to discuss issues with us, and representatives from a Non-Governmental Organisation who introduced themselves in the margins of our July meeting prior to our consideration of an emergency authorisation application. This is an aspect of our work which the Committee always finds enjoyable and interesting. We think it is important to hear a range of views and will endeavour to do more of this in the future, through our Open Meetings and in other ways. The Committee thanks all of those who made the time to attend our meetings and provided clear answers to our searching questions. This part of our work helps us to understand the risks associated with pesticide use and how they can be managed, ensuring that society derives the benefits of access to responsible use of these chemicals.



It is anticipated that the Committee's day-to-day work in 2017 will largely mirror that of 2016. We expect, for example, to provide advice on: a diverse range of applications for emergency authorisations – the Committee recognises that this is an essential part of the control regime and importance of operating the arrangements with integrity; and novel measures for mitigating risk to help ensure society retains access to sustainably-used pesticide products.

The world, however, does not stand still. Scientific understanding and technology are, of course, continually advancing and it is important that the regime for regulating pesticides responds to this. We will continue to help Government to determine how the range of controls on the authorisation and use of pesticides should deal with any emerging issues/options for new ways of working. The Committee recognises that science does not always deliver conclusive answers to every question, so we also provide advice that enables Government to make informed, evidence-led, science-based decisions.

We are sure you will find this report an interesting and informative summary of the Committee and our work. If you have any questions about this report and/or our activities please contact our Secretariat whose details can be found on page 20.



Professor **William Cushley**
Chairman, UK Expert Committee on Pesticides

Role of the Committee

ECP is a Defra Expert Committee providing independent scientific advice to Ministers and Governments (including those in the Devolved Administrations) on the authorisation of pesticides in the UK and on other matters related to the control of pests more broadly. Our Terms of Reference are set out in Annex I.

A list of our Members can be found at Annex II. Our Committee contains a mix of expertise. Some of us are academics working in specialist areas of study relevant to assessing the risks and benefits of pest control. Others are members appointed to consider issues from a public perspective. We also include those with practical experience of pesticide use in the farming and amenity sectors amongst our numbers.

Members are appointed following open public recruitment. We are appointed as independent individuals, not representing any particular interest. In line with the [Nolan principle](#) on public life we have declared any aspects of our work that may be perceived to present a potential conflict of interest. Members also work in accordance with the Committee's Code of Practice. At our meetings we declare and describe any potential conflict of interest.



We seek to operate transparently, publishing minutes and a detailed record of our deliberations and holding regular open meetings. Due to the commercially confidential nature of some of our deliberations, however, it is necessary to assess carefully the amount of information we put into the public domain. In some cases, we therefore do not publish material which is commercially sensitive.

Our work in 2016

Day-to-day work regulating pesticides is conducted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Those who wish to place pesticides products on the market must obtain an authorisation to do so. Authorisations are granted by the HSE following careful evaluation of data demonstrating that use of the product will not harm human health or have unacceptable effects on the environment (including wildlife). Legally enforceable restrictions are placed on the way products must be used (for example, amount applied, timing of application, need for operators to wear protective clothing, avoiding applications close to water, hedgerows etc) to ensure safety. These restrictions are derived from an EU-based regime for controlling pesticides.



The ECP sees a small proportion of the work undertaken by HSE, generally the more difficult and novel casework. Each year we undertake an exercise to 'quality assure' the 'routine' HSE casework. Our assessment of the 2015 casework concluded that HSE considered applications for the authorisation of pesticides robustly and appropriately, with decisions being made on a sound evidential and scientific basis. We will report our assessment of HSE's 2016 casework in next year's Annual Report.



2016 saw the Committee consider a range of challenging and interesting issues. Perhaps our most high-profile activity related to providing advice on a range of applications for the emergency authorisation of pesticide products. We convened a special additional meeting in June to consider applications for emergency authorisations, reflecting the importance we attach to this aspect of our work. During the course of the year we looked in detail at thirteen applications related to control of pests in a wide variety of crops situations, including: arable and horticultural cultivation; forestry; management of waterways; upland management; and amenity grassland.

In many cases applicants were able to demonstrate that the case for an emergency authorisation had been made by addressing issues such as: the case for need and lack of suitable alternative control methods; how to limit and control the use; and avoiding continuing reliance on this form of authorisation. In some cases (including a high profile application relating to the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on oilseed rape crops) we advised that an insufficiently robust case had been presented and that we could not support the granting of an authorisation.

During 2016 we also ensured that Government was kept apprised of the implications of emerging research relating to the impact of the neonicotinoid pesticides on bees and other pollinators. The Committee reviews new data/studies at every other meeting to assess the risks arising from the use of products containing these pesticides, using a weight of evidence approach.

We discussed this topic with the Defra Minister of State, Defra Chief Scientific Advisor and Chair of the Science Advisory Council who joined us for part of our meeting in March.



We provided advice to pesticide regulators on matters related to the authorisation of a number of specific pesticides, including those containing: metaldehyde (where the product re-registration process has identified issues related to environmental protection); and chlorpropham (where we advised that it was appropriate to reduce authorised dose rates to help address greater-than-expected variability of residues in stored potatoes). We also reviewed development relating to, and provided advice to companies responsible for, a stewardship programme for nematicide products.

Ensuring that pesticide use does not harm human health is a critical part of our work. We consider data generated from a range of human health monitoring programmes to help assess the impact pesticide use may be having. The findings are re-assuring and consistent with previous years - the vast majority of reports relate to people without symptoms or only minor ones. During 2016 we also considered the outcome of a research project that identified the costs and benefits of establishing new human health monitoring arrangements proposed by a sub-Group of our predecessor (the ACP).

We noted, and advised Government, that there were potentially substantial costs associated with doing this and that it was not clear that the new arrangements would improve the quality of the information available to ourselves and others.



We considered, received updates, and/or provided advice on a range of other matters, including:

- The authorisation of six novel pesticide products;
- The issue of a national provisional authorisation.
- A proposed update to the UK National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides.
- Development of the regulatory regime for pesticides including: progress to develop a definition of an 'endocrine disruptor', for use as a hazard trigger in regulating pesticides; the introduction of 'comparative assessment'; development of a new EU 'Official Controls' Regulation; and publication of new, and influence of, guidance documents.
- The work of, and liaison with, bodies such as the Hazardous Substances Advisory Committee and Pesticide Residues in Food Committee. We have worked more closely with these bodies in 2016.
- The process to determine a hazard classification for glyphosate.
- Grower's rationale for the use of pesticides.
- The principles of product stewardship.
- Two reports from the UK pesticide usage survey programme.
- How pesticide use relates to the work of Defra's Animal and Plant Health Agency, the Food Standards Agency, Department of Health, National Poisons Information Service and the Science and Media Centre.

ANNEX I

Terms of Reference

Remit of the Committee

1. The UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (the Committee) is established to provide independent scientific advice on matters relating to the effective control of pests¹, including advice on approval and authorisation of pesticides². In this work, the Committee will take account of the general purposes of Part III of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 (FEPA) as set out in Section 16(1) of the Act. These are:

(a) The continuous development of means:

- (i) to protect the health of people, creatures and plants;
- (ii) to safeguard the environment; and
- (iii) to secure safe, efficient and humane methods of controlling pests.

(b) Making information about pesticides available to the public.

2. The Committee shall provide advice and recommendations to the Ministers listed below on any matter within its remit, either in response to a request or at the Committee's initiative. The Committee will normally provide its advice to the Assessors (provided for in paragraph 14 below) but may provide advice directly to all or any of the following Ministers (referred to collectively in this document as "the Ministers"): the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Secretary of State for Health, Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers and the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland.

3. The Committee will be consulted on regulations relating to the general purposes of Part III of FEPA and falling within its remit which any or all of the Ministers contemplate making.

¹ "pest" means: any organism harmful to plants or to wood or other plant products; any undesired plant; and any harmful organism. This definition is not intended to place a strict limit on the Committee's remit.

² "pesticide" means any substance, preparation or organism prepared or used for destroying or controlling any pest. It includes everything within the scope of Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market. This definition is not intended to place a strict limit on the Committee's remit.

General provisions

4. The lead Defra Minister will set the Terms of Reference for the Committee in agreement with the Ministers. Any proposal to vary these Terms of Reference or abolish the Committee would also be subject to agreement by all the Ministers. In all these cases the Committee itself will be consulted; the Ministers will ultimately set the remit of the Committee, while the Committee will determine its ways of working.

5. The Ministers may receive: strategic work plans for particular areas of on-going work; reports and advice; and periodic reviews of the Committee's functions, public benefits and value for money.

6. The Committee will, as appropriate and within its remit:

- Contribute to developing the evidence base, analysing and interpreting evidence and providing judgements on quality and relevance;
- Support policy development and evaluation, including by undertaking risk assessment and assessing new regulations and proposals for deregulation;
- Advise on the scope for specific projects and research;
- Contribute to best practice advice and formal guidance; and
- Help the response to emergency situations by providing expert advice and opinion.

7. The Committee will provide independent advice and operate in line with the [Principles of Scientific Advice to government](#) and the [Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees](#).

8. The Committee will make its scientific conclusions and recommendations available to the public and other interested parties in a way which aims to be comprehensive, clear and timely. The Committee will decide its own publication schedule.

9. Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) will maintain an oversight of the work of the Committee and will meet at least annually with its Chair. The Committee will contribute to Defra reports, publications or guidance as appropriate; this may include providing an annual summary of its work for inclusion in the Annual Report of [Defra's Science Advisory Council](#).

Appointments and conduct of Members

10. The Chair and the Members of the Committee are independent appointments made through open competition, in line with [OCPA guidelines on best practice for making public appointments](#). Appointments are made by the Senior Responsible Owner within Defra in agreement with: Department of Work and Pensions; Department of Health; Food Standards Agency; Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland; Scottish Government; and the Welsh Ministers. These bodies will also agree the plans for each recruitment exercise.

11. Members are expected to act in accordance with the [seven 'Nolan' principles of public life](#).

Working groups and additional expertise

12. Subject to the availability of funds, the Committee may: establish groups to support aspects of its work; and bring in additional expertise (from the UK or abroad) to advise on specific issues.

Advisers

13. Advisers are officials, from any of the UK administrations, with specialist expertise who can advise the Committee. At the time of establishment of the Committee, advisers are drawn from the Environment Agency, the Food Standards Agency, the Health and Safety Executive and Natural England. Any future additions to this list will be arranged by agreement between the Committee and the relevant Department or body. Advisers shall receive the meeting documents at the same time as Committee members and have the right to attend Committee meetings. They will contribute to discussions when invited to do so.

Assessors

14. Each of the following appoints one of their officials as an Assessor: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Department of Work and Pensions; Department of Health; Food Standards Agency; Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland; Scottish Government; and the Welsh Ministers. Assessors receive and respond to the advice and recommendations supplied by the Committee to their Ministers.

Where appropriate they are responsible for seeking the views of their Minister on the advice from the Committee. Assessors shall receive the meeting documents at the same time as Committee members and have the right to attend ECP meetings. They will contribute to discussions when invited to do so.

**Department for the Environment
Food & Rural Affairs**
May 2015



ANNEX II

Members

(at 31 December 2016) and declarations of interest

Chairman

Professor William Cushley is Professor of Molecular Immunology at the University of Glasgow. His research interests are in B cell development in health and disease. He has wide experience of scientific bodies having lately been Chair of the Board of Trustee Directors of the Babraham Institute in Cambridge. He is also currently Chair of Health & Life Science review Panels for the European Science Foundation. Bill was appointed to the ACP in 2014.

No interests declared.

Members

Prof Gary Bending is a Professor in Environmental Science in the School of Life Sciences at the University of Warwick. He specialises in understanding processes which control the fate of pesticides in the environment. This is his fourth year on the Committee.

Non-personal interests

PhD studentships; Syngenta providing stipend uplift and a top-up for consumables, travel and subsistence

- BBSRC Industrial CASE award (2013-2017)
- Warwick University-Syngenta CASE award (2015-2019)

Co-funding with Defra of research project 'Evaluating the potential of constructed wetland features for mitigating the impact of pesticide losses from agricultural land (2013-2017). Act as co-investigator on the award.

Professor Rod Blackshaw was recently the Director of the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability at Plymouth University. He has extensive experience working as an applied entomologist and soil ecotoxicology. His research interests predominantly lie in integrated pest management and soil zoology. This is his third year on the Committee.

No interests declared.

Ms H Chambers is an Occupational Hygienist in the Health and Safety Executive. She specialises in understanding human exposure to hazardous substances and management of the risks presented, in a wide range of workplaces. This is her first year on the Committee.

No interests declared.

Mr Richard Davis is a retired Director of HSEs Chemicals Regulation Directorate, and a graduate in plant pathology. This is his fourth year on the Committee.

No interests declared.

Ms Jennifer Dean is a barrister, and is the lay member for consumer affairs. This is her seventh year on the Committee.

No interests declared.

Mr M Dempsey is the support services manager in Calderdale Council. A founder member of the Northern Amenity Forum he is also a part time horticultural lecturer at Kirklees College and is the lay member for environmental matters. This is his first year on the Committee.

No interests declared.

Mr Derek Finnegan provides advice to the Committee on pesticide chemistry and residues. This is his fifth year on the Committee.

No interests declared.

Dr Martin Hare is a Principal Lecturer in Agronomy at Harper Adams University, where he is Associate Head of the Crop and Environment Sciences Department and Chair of the Research Degrees Standards Committee. He is BASIS qualified and has over twenty years' research experience working with pesticides. This is his fifth year on the Committee.

Non-personal interests

Line management responsibility at Harper Adams University for a number of academic staff who may at any time have research and/or research students funded by a range of funding bodies and commercial companies.

Professor Tom Hutchinson is an expert in the ecotoxicology and the risks posed by chemicals to freshwater and marine ecosystems. He is Professor of Environment and Health Sciences at the University of Plymouth. This is his fourth year on the Committee.

Current personal interests:

- University of Plymouth receives funding from BBSRC, DECC, Defra, Environment Agency, EPSRC, European Commission, Food and Environment Research Agency Ltd., Food Standards Agency, Natural England and NERC for a wide range of research projects;
- ECETOC (European Centre for the Ecotoxicology & Toxicology of Chemicals) - Invited to participate in the review of research proposals to the European Chemicals Industry (CEFIC-LRi) (without payment);
- Invited to attend March 2016 HESI (Health & Environmental Sciences Institute) workshop on Whole Effluent Assessment hosted by L'Oréal Limited (without payment);

Non personal current interests:

- Brunel University - Honorary Chair;
- University of Exeter - Honorary Chair;
- Plymouth Marine Laboratory - Honorary Fellow.

[Supplemental information: relatives farming 200ha of land/employed by Swedish agricultural engineering company].

Professor Edward Lock is Industrial Professor of Toxicology at Liverpool John Moores University. This is his fifth year on the Committee.

No interests declared.

Dr Chris Morris is a Senior Lecturer at the Medical Toxicology Centre at Newcastle University. He is also a member of the Dementia and Neurodegenerative Diseases Group and the Complex Genetics and Pharmacogenetics Research Group at the University. His research interests are in the causes of neurological disorders. This is his sixth year on the Committee.

No interests declared.

Professor Keith Palmer is Professor of Occupational Medicine with the University of Southampton. His areas of special interest include the causes, clinical management and prevention of illnesses associated with work. This is his sixth year on the Committee.

No interests declared

Professor Richard Shore is a vertebrate ecotoxicologist and Head of Site at the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH) at Lancaster. He is a senior researcher investigating the environmental impacts of contaminants, and has an Honorary Chair at Lancaster University. This is his fifth year on the Committee.

Non-personal interest

Review of the results of avian reproductive toxicity tests conducted for Dow AgroSciences. Work for review was paid for by Dow and undertaken as a small contract for CEH. CEH received the payment, but no personal financial or other benefit from the work.

Professor Andy Smith is Director of the Medical Research Council's (MRC) Toxicology Unit Integrative Toxicology Training Partnership based at the University of Leicester and Honorary Professor in Cancer Studies and Molecular Medicine. This is his fifth year on the Committee.

No interests declared



Dr Simon Wilkinson is a lecturer at the Medical Toxicology Centre, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne. He researches into routes of exposure to harmful chemicals, especially dermal absorption and metabolism. This is his fifth year on the Committee.

No interests declared.

The Committee is currently undertaking an exercise to ensure it possesses the necessary skill set to best fulfil its remit. If necessary a recruitment exercise will be undertaken to bring relevant expertise on board.

ANNEX III

Fees and reimbursement

Fees and reimbursement

Members of the ECP are not salaried staff but do receive a fee for attendance at meetings. They are not paid if they do not attend meetings, although they receive a preparation fee if they comment in writing.

Chair's fees

Attendance fee £180
Preparation fee £45

Deputy Chair's fees and members' fees

Attendance fee £142
Preparation fee £36

The Chair and Members also receive reimbursement of reasonable actual travel and subsistence when attending meetings.

The ECP is assisted in the committee by the following officials:

Departmental assessors are officials who receive and respond to the advice/recommendations supplied by the Committee to ministers on behalf of their department. Where appropriate they are responsible for seeking the views of their minister on the advice from the ECP.

Departmental assessors as at 31 December 2016

Mr David Williams	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Mr Robin Foster	Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
Dr Jackie Hughes	Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA)
Dr Paul Holley	Department of Health
Mr Mark Willis	Food Standards Agency (FSA)
Mr Martin Williams	Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)
Dr Stephen Jess	Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute Northern Ireland (AFBINI)

Departmental advisers are officials with specialist expertise who can advise the ECP.

Departmental advisers as at 31 December 2016

Ms Gabrielle Edwards	Defra
Mr Mark Wilson	Defra
Mr Dave Bench	HSE, CRD
Miss Sarah Shore	HSE, CRD
Dr Steve Fairhurst	HSE, CRD
Mr Adrian Dixon	HSE, CRD
Dr Chris Snaith	HSE
Ms Margaret Wade	HSE
Mr Barry Maycock	FSA
Dr Paul Whitehouse	Environment Agency
Dr Susan Zappala	Natural England

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Secretary – Grant Stark

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ANNEX IV

Sub-groups

The ECP was assisted in its work by a number of sub-Groups including: the Environmental Panel; the Medical and Toxicological Panel and the Working Party on Pesticide Usage Surveys. These sub-Groups have not met for a number of years.

The Committee is considering reconstituting the Environmental and the Medical and Toxicological Panels, subject to identifying a suitable work program, terms of reference, resourcing and membership.

The Working Party on Pesticide Usage Surveys oversees delivery of the Pesticide Usage Survey Programme. Members are responsible for collecting and analysing pesticide sales and usage data and preparing and publishing reports detailing findings on a range of crops and situations. The Working Party is Chaired by Julie Howarth (HSE), the Members are Dave Garthwaite (Fera Science Ltd), Jackie Hughes (SASA), Stephen Jess (AFBINI), Mike Lole, Peter Gladders and Sarah Cook (all ADAS), Liz Turner (Crop Protection Association) and Peter Marsden (Drinking Water Inspectorate) and the Technical Secretary is Tracey Ware (HSE).