

UK Expert Committee on Pesticides Annual Report 2017

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



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

Chair's foreword

Welcome to the 2017 Annual Report of the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP). The committee provides independent advice to UK government and the devolved administrations on matters related to the authorisation and use of pesticides.

2017 was another busy and interesting year for the committee. My thanks go to all the individuals and organisations who contributed to our work. This includes: committee members, advisors and assessors who fully and robustly discuss matters and display great understanding, judgement and expertise in addressing complex issues; and government officials and representatives of other organisations who have been questioned by and/or advise us. It is critical that the committee considers an appropriately wide range of views in order that our advice is soundly based. We appreciate the time and effort given by those who have helped. They have played their part in ensuring that society can derive the benefits that can accrue from the safe and responsible use of pesticides without being exposed to an unacceptable degree of risk.



The period covered by this report was a significant one for the committee. We updated our advice to government on the risk posed to bees from the use of certain pesticide products containing neonicotinoids. Following several years of carefully reviewing new studies, data and information, we concluded that the weight of evidence had reached a point at which it could no longer be concluded that use of these chemicals posed an acceptable risk. We understand that this can be an emotive issue for many and that whatever view the committee takes will disappoint some. However, please be assured that this (as with all ECP) advice is based on a comprehensive and deep review of available evidence, testing of assumptions and attaching due weight to the information we consider.

Scientific understanding, technological developments and the political and regulatory environment in which we operate are, of course, continually changing and it is important that the committee adapts to deal with these challenges. Part of our response to this has been to review our membership, appointing 3 new members (Claire Stephenson, Damien McElvenny and Ruth Mann) to the committee; they are already making a valuable contribution to the work coming our way. 2017 has also seen the departure of Keith Palmer and Derek Finnegan, and we thank them for their excellent contributions over many years. We wish to note our particular thanks to Keith who has been a member of ACP and ECP for six years, including three years as Deputy Chair of ECP. Keith served ACP and ECP with great distinction, bringing intellectual rigour, clear reasoning and superb scientific judgment to the work of the Committee. We shall miss him greatly.

I anticipate that 'change' will be the theme of committee business in 2018 as we prepare for the UK's exit from the EU, consider innovative ways of mitigating the risks which can arise from the use of some pesticide products, and ensure that technological advances play a full role in supporting more sustainable use of these chemicals. We will, of course, continue advising on pesticide use and product authorisation issues, particularly applications to deal with emergency situations.

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 contact details can be found on page 21.



Professor **W Cushley**
Chair, UK Expert Committee on Pesticides

Role of the committee

The 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 1.

A list of our members can be found at Annex 2. 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 principles 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 the agendas of our meetings and a detailed record of our discussions, and holding occasional 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 2017

Day-to-day work regulating pesticides is conducted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Those who wish to place pesticide products on the market must obtain an authorisation to do so. Authorisations are granted by 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 most recent assessment of the casework (for 2017) concluded that HSE considered applications for the authorisation of pesticides robustly and appropriately, with decisions being made on a sound evidential and scientific basis. This provides reassurance to the public and ministers that the regulatory system functions as intended.



2017 saw the Committee consider a range of challenging and interesting issues. Our most high-profile project was to update advice that the ECP's predecessor (the Advisory Committee on Pesticides) provided to Government on the risks arising from the use of neonicotinoid pesticides. We have been regularly reviewing the suite of evidence related to this issue for a number of years, scrutinising data and applying scientific principles to determine the weight that should be attached to the findings being reported. The weight of evidence has been moving in a particular direction for some time. But it was not until the autumn of 2017 that the committee concluded it had reached a point at which we could no longer be confident that there was an acceptable risk to pollinators from the use of these chemicals in flowering crops. ECP therefore supported the continuation of existing restrictions on use. In the light of emerging evidence of environmental contamination arising from the use of these insecticides, the ECP considered that extension of the restrictions to non-flowering crops could also be justified. We will, of course, keep this issue under review and update our advice if and when it is appropriate to do so.



We also provided advice throughout the year on a range of applications for the emergency authorisation of pesticide products. We convened a special additional meeting in April to consider applications related to this type of authorisation, reflecting the importance we attach to this aspect of our work. During the course of the year ECP considered 23 applications related to control of pests, weeds or diseases in a wide variety of crops and situations. The majority of these related to horticultural production, perhaps reflecting the fact that the pesticide review programme has resulted in the loss of access to chemistry required by these growers to help manage pests, weeds and diseases. Other emergency authorisation applications related to: agricultural situations; management of waterways; ornamental cultivation; and upland management.

In many cases applicants were able to demonstrate that the case for an emergency authorisation had been made addressing issues such as: the case for need and lack of suitable alternative control methods; how to limit and control the use; avoiding continuing reliance on this form of authorisation; and establishing that the risks from any potential uses are understood. In some cases we advised that an insufficiently robust case had been presented and that we could not support the granting of an authorisation.

The most prominent application related to the proposed use of neonicotinoid seed treatments. The committee considered that the case had not been made to grant an authorisation, in particular that the use would be sufficiently limited and controlled. Other notable applications included the proposed use of:

- a product to control aquatic weeds – we advised that this be refused due to a combination of the degree of risk associated with the use; presence of alternative methods of control; and the failure of the applicant to provide requested information
- products to provide a control programme for an invasive pest (spotted wing drosophila) on a range of fruit crops – we advised that these be granted due to the pressing need for control, limited scale of use and the fact there would be no long-term reliance on emergency authorisations

Additionally we have provided advice to government on matters related to the authorisation of pesticide products containing specific active substances. In particular, ECP devoted great attention to products containing metaldehyde, where regulators have been involved in a relatively long-running and multi-faceted project to re-authorise such products. The committee has heard directly from relevant industry bodies and helped the government to identify and assess the risks associated with the proposed uses of these products and determine whether, and how, they can be mitigated. An important part of this work has been to determine a suitable role for product stewardship – as part of an associated project we have advised government on the circumstances in which it may be appropriate to use this mechanism to reduce risks, and the features of a robust programme.

Ensuring that that pesticide use does not harm human health is a critical part of our work. We considered data generated from a range of human health monitoring programmes (details below) to help assess the impact pesticide use may be having. The findings are reassuring and consistent with previous years – the vast majority of reports relate to people without symptoms or only minor ones.

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

- the withdrawal of authorisations of glyphosate products containing POE-tallowamines
- the first national authorisation of 4 products – ‘Isonet T’, ‘Amylo X WG’, ‘Proradix’ and ‘Trico’
- a pesticide product with a new mode of action – double strand RNAi
- the Defra Network of Evidence Experts
- a proposed stewardship programme for products containing thiram
- pesticide regulation in the Netherlands
- human health data monitoring review: National Poisons Information Service, and Human Health Enquiry Incident Survey
- an EFSA human biomonitoring study
- EFSA consideration of epidemiological studies linking exposure to pesticides and health effects
- the European Parliament Report on the health implications of organic food and organic farming
- the work of, and liaison with, bodies such as the Pesticide Residues in Food Committee
- implications of EU exit
- a revised approach to the treatment of applications for emergency authorisation
- the control of spotted wing drosophila
- a horticultural industry update on the continued need for emergency authorisation for the use of copper
- the state of play of commission proposals for criteria for endocrine disruptors
- non-target arthropod buffer/habitat protection zones
- the first occasion UK product authorisations have included the requirement to observe a no-spray habitat protection zone to protect non-target plants

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
- (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, Environment and Rural Affairs 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, Environment and Rural Affairs 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.

Advisors

13. Advisors are officials from any of the UK administrations with specialist expertise who can advise the committee. At the time of establishment of the committee, advisors 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. Advisors 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, Environment and Rural Affairs 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 and Rural Affairs

May 2015



ANNEX II

Members

(at 31 December 2017) 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 and Life Science review panels for the European Science Foundation. Bill was appointed to the ACP in 2014.

No interests declared.

Members

Professor 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 fifth year on the committee.

Non-personal interests

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

- BBSRC-Syngenta CASE studentship
- Warwick collaborative postgraduate research scholarship co-funded with Syngenta
- Co-I on Lonza project evaluating the potential of constructed wetland features for mitigating the impact of pesticide losses from agricultural land

Professor Rod Blackshaw is the retired Director of the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability at Plymouth University. He has extensive experience working as an applied entomologist and in soil ecotoxicology. His research interests predominantly lie in integrated pest management and soil zoology. This is his fourth year on the committee and he will be assuming the role of deputy chairman from 2018.

No interests declared.

Ms Helen 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 second year on the committee.

No interests declared.

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

No interests declared.

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

No interests declared.

Mr Mark 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 second 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 20 years' research experience working with pesticides. This is his sixth 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 fifth year on the committee.

Personal interests:

- University of Plymouth receives funding from BBSRC, Defra, Environment Agency, EPSRC, European Commission, Food and Environment Research Agency Ltd., Food Standards Agency, GO Science, Natural England and NERC for a wide range of research projects
- Defra – personal appointment as Science Leader for UK-Japan Research Collaboration on Endocrine Disrupters in the Aquatic Environment (funded via CEFAS project C5046 from 1 October 2013 to 31 March 2015): Scientific consultancy to UK government (with payment)
- Government Office for Science: commissioned to contribute to an evidence review on marine pollution as part of the 'Futures of the Sea' project: Scientific consultancy to UK government (with payment)
- ECETOC (European Centre for the Ecotoxicology and 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 and Environmental Sciences Institute) workshop on Whole Effluent Assessment hosted by L'Oréal Limited (without payment)

Non personal interests:

- Food and Environment Research Agency Limited – NERC Industrial CASE award for a cooperative PhD research studentship on fungal toxins in aquatic ecosystems
- Honorary Chair, Brunel University
- Honorary Chair, University of Exeter
- Honorary Fellow, Plymouth Marine Laboratory

[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. Research interest in mechanism of target organ toxicity and mode of action of xenobiotic chemicals. Treatment of metabolic disorders of tyrosine catabolism. This is his sixth year on the committee.

Personal interests

Consultancy to Syngenta for 5 days, with a fee.

Dr Ruth Mann is Head of Research at STRI and a director of the Amenity Forum. Her broad research background is integrated disease management in agricultural and horticultural crops. Her current research interests include holistic management of all sport surfaces and amenity area. Ruth is also an approved trainer for BASIS Amenity Horticulture. This is her first year on the committee.

Non-personal interests

Worked on an extension of authorisation for minor use for Acelepryn in 2017. STRI completes multiple trials for the pesticide industry internationally and is officially recognised as an efficacy testing organisation in the UK. She is responsible for the teams completing this work. STRI also provides consultancy services, including advice on pesticides to the sports turf industry.

Professor Damien McElvenny is a biostatistician and epidemiologist and is principal epidemiologist at the Institute of Occupational Medicine in Edinburgh. He is honorary associate professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Honorary Member of the Society of Occupational Medicine. He is a director of Statistics Analysis and Health Limited. Damien's primary research interest is in using epidemiology to better understand the effect on health of people's work. This is his first 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 seventh year on the committee.

No interests declared.

Professor Richard Shore is a vertebrate ecotoxicologist and Head of Site at the Centre for Ecology and 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 sixth year on the committee.

Non-personal interests:

- Project Leader of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology's (CEH) multi-funded Natural England Predatory Bird Monitoring Scheme (PBMS) – funders vary annually but have included in recent years Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Natural England (NE), and Defra Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU)
- Project leader for on-going CRRU funded study run by CEH that monitors residues of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides in barn owls
- Engagement with 'WILDCOMS' Knowledge Exchange network that facilitates knowledge exchange between diverse stakeholders, which may include pesticide companies
- Member of previous FMC Corporation expert panel on field monitoring to assess potential for pesticide bioaccumulation
- Member of project board of a Bayer and Syngenta-funded CEH project investigating the exposure and effects of pollinators to neonicotinoid pesticides – project completed and published 2017

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 sixth year on the committee.

No interests declared.

Dr Claire Stephenson is a senior managing scientist in the Centre for Chemical Regulation and Food Safety, Exponent International Ltd. She specialises in pesticide metabolism, residues in food, and dietary risk assessment. This is her first year on the Committee.

Non-personal interests

Employer is a scientific consultancy which undertakes work for a range of chemical companies in support of product approvals.

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 sixth year on the committee.

No interests declared.

The committee regularly reviews membership to ensure it has the right balance of expertise to meet the challenges it faces.



ANNEX III

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 2017

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)
Ms Trudy Netherwood	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 2017

Ms Gabrielle Edwards	Defra
Ms Carole Lowther	Defra
Ms Kären Clayton	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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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, but do consider papers by correspondence.

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 Adam Hinchcliffe (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).

