INFORMATION FOR BBKA MEMBERS

The EU moratorium

December 1st 2013 was the start date for a two year EU moratorium put in force by the European Commission concerning clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiomethoxam and the withdrawal of professional use on crops considered attractive to bees (a long list including Oil Seed Rape / Maize and on cereals apart from the seed treatment of winter cereals).

One of the consequences of this moratorium* was that the withdrawal of the authorisations for professional use meant that the products affected were no longer licensed to be applied in these defined end uses. After the two year period during which reviews of the affected active substances take place the products cannot immediately be reinstated to their previous status. They would be dealt with by the regulatory perspective as 'new products' for those applications covered by the moratorium. This would take time and cost money. There are clearly commercial decisions to be made as well as regulatory ones. One of the key questions still to be answered is the actual exposure of bees (honey bees) in the field to neonicotinoids and previous BBKA statements (see 5th July 2015 for latest) have described the large scale field trial being undertaken under the direction for the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology. We understand the work is progressing well and that some preliminary results may be available late autumn 2015. The BBKA is updated on this work through its participation in the Bee Health Advisory Forum and the Pollinator Advisory Strategy Group. The results of this independent research should provide both qualitative and quantitative data for honey bees from which risk assessments can be made to determine whether honey bees are being exposed to neonicotinoids and that the exposure is giving rise to impacts on honey bee colonies. This key work should address the first caveat in the 2015 ADM proposition regarding the continuing support of the EU moratorium, namely independent scientific research showing harm or otherwise to honey bees.

In terms of supporting the continuation of the EU moratorium we need to understand the processes which might follow the publication of the review findings, the proposals to be put to the Member States, and the reaction of the crop protection and farming industries as well as all the other stakeholders. This has not yet been stated and we are trying to establish the procedures to be followed and the opportunities for organisations like the BBKA to comment on the proposals. There is effectively nothing to do re extending/maintaining the moratorium as effectively the products will have to be reauthorized in the context of the findings of the current research project.

120 Day Emergency Authorisations

Under certain circumstances it is possible for Member States (MS) to authorise the use of a plant protection product for a period not exceeding 120 days, for a limited and controlled use where such a measure is necessary because of a danger which cannot be contained by any other means as set out in Article 53 of Regulation (EC) 1107/2009. When issuing such emergency authorisations the MS concerned must inform the other MSs and the Commission of the authorisation given, detailed information about the situation and any measures taken to ensure consumer safety. If necessary the Commission will take a decision as to whether the MS can extend or repeat the emergency authorisation or whether the authorisation must be amended or withdrawn.

Authorisation would be given for a maximum period of 120 days and as such it is a temporary solution to a pest problem for which a more permanent solution must be found.

Recently 120 day emergency authorisations have been granted for a very limited use of Modesto and Cruiser OSR to treat 5% of the planned sowing of OSR seed in England for use in a limited

geographical area (Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) amounting to around 30,000 hectares. The seed has to be certified seed. Farmers will not be able to use treated seed after 20th November 2015.

The National Farmers Union (www.nfuonline.com) has an informative Q&A webpage on the Emergency Authorisation for neonicotinoids.

For an emergency authorisation to be granted (and it is only a one off situation) the following criteria have to be satisfied:-

- There is a problem
- There is a need for the emergency authorisation
- A solution is available
- The proposed authorisation will be successful

The BBKA first became aware of the decision to grant these Emergency Authorisations at around 08.50 on The Today programme on BBC Radio 4 on the morning of the announcement and then later - formally via the Pollinator Strategy Advisory Group. The BBKA has expressed its dissatisfaction to Defra about the lack of prior communication of the decision which had been taken before its public announcement.

The following links identify the decision making process which has been followed

http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/advisory-groups/acp/acp-minutes/ECP-minutes-1-20-May-2015.htm

http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/advisory-groups/acp/ACP-News/ECP-1-detailed-record

http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/advisory-groups/acp/acp-minutes/ECP-2-7-July-2015.htm

http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/advisory-groups/acp/ACP-News/ECP-Agenda-2

It is interesting to note that Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Romania and Bulgaria have all issued emergency authorisations for the use of neonicotinoids.

Members of the Pollinator Strategy Advisory Group have demanded a special meeting with Defra which the BBKA would attend. We wait the Government's response to the request for such a meeting.

As the work of EFSA (European Food Safety Agency) and its expert committees and the conducting of crucial field experiments are very much still in progress it is impossible to predict either the timing or the outcome of either the findings of the field studies or the proposals which will be made by the European Commission pending the publications of their findings. The time at which the BBKA can decide on its position make it representations most effectively will be once we have been able to study the report and its findings, know the proposals being made on the future for these substances. As of today the timing of this is unclear.

(a moratorium being an agreed suspension of activity)

Dr D Aston

4th August 2015