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GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Neonicotinoid Insecticides to Be Banned in France from 2018

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Report Highlights:

In July 2016, France adopted a bill that bans the use of neonicotinoid insecticides from September 2018. Several restrictions were already in place at France and European Union levels. Some uses of these insecticides are believed to play a part in bee Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD).

General Information:

France to Ban Neonicotinoid Insecticides from September 2018

On July 20, 2016, the French Parliament adopted a bill on biodiversity that bans the use of neonicotinoid insecticides in France from September 1, 2018. All plant protection products that contain neonicotinoids and the seeds treated with such products will be banned. A risk-benefit analysis will be conducted by the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES). If it shows that neonicotinoids have a better risk-benefit profile than alternative products, it will be possible for farmers to be granted exemptions until July 1, 2020 by a joint order of the Ministries of Agriculture and of the Environment.

In 2015, the first reading of the bill on biodiversity had proposed to ban neonicotinoid from January 2017. During the second reading, the date was changed to September 2018. The third reading has introduced the possibility of exemptions until 2020.

Sugar beet and cereals farmers complain that this measure will create distortions of competition, since it will increase their production costs compared to countries like Germany and the United Kingdom where no ban is in place. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is in the process of reviewing the risks to bees posed by neonicotinoids. Their evaluation is expected to be completed by January 2017.

Some Restrictions Already in Place at France and European Union Levels

Some restrictions were already in place when the new ban was adopted:

- France banned the use of a neonicotinoid (imidacloprid) for sunflowers in 1999 and for corn in 2004. In addition, there have been restrictions on the use of thiamethoxam for rapeseed since 2012.
- In 2013, following new scientific findings, the European Commission adopted a regulation that minimizes the exposure of bees to three neonicotinoids (imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, and clothianidin) for two years (between December 2013 and December 2015). [1] This regulation bans plant protection products that contain one of these neonicotinoids for use as seed, soil, and foliar treatments. The ban applies to cereals and to crops attractive to bees (it does not apply to sugar beets), except for uses in greenhouses and for winter cereals.

[1] [COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION \(EU\) No 485/2013 of 24 May 2013](#)