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Voluntary Public

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President Macron calls on France to ban use of glyphosate

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

Agriculture in the Economy

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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Report Highlights:

Following the EU's decision to extend the authorization of glyphosate for another five years, French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted that he asked the Government of France to take all necessary measures to ban the use of glyphosate as soon as an alternative was found; at the latest within 3 years. In the longer-term this could negatively impact U.S. trade to France if France considers blocking imports from countries that use glyphosate.

General Information:

Following the EU's decision this week to extend the authorization of glyphosate for another five years, French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted that he asked the Government of France to take all necessary measures to ban the use of glyphosate as soon as an alternative was found; at the latest within 3 years.



Emmanuel Macron

@EmmanuelMacron

Abonné

J'ai demandé au gouvernement de prendre les dispositions nécessaires pour que l'utilisation du glyphosate soit interdite en France dès que des alternatives auront été trouvées, et au plus tard dans 3 ans.

#MakeOurPlanetGreatAgain

19:10 - 27 nov. 2017

2 910 Retweets 7 240 J'aime



Farmers expressed frustration with the decision, and farmer unions and other parties called for “safeguard measures” to stop imports of products from countries that use compounds not approved in France. In the longer-term this could negatively impact U.S. trade to France if it blocks any agricultural products that use glyphosate in their production. It could be compared to the French ban on all fresh cherries from countries that allow the use of dimethoate for cherry production. This “safeguard measure” ban impacts about \$1 million in sales of U.S. cherries to France annually.

While environmentalists and NGOs applauded President Macron’s move, French farmers reacted negatively. Minister of Agriculture Travert, who had initially applauded to the EU’s decision, remained silent. The main French farmers’ union, FNSEA, highlighted that President Macron had pledged during his presidential campaign not to “gold plate” EU’s norms and regulations and has broken his campaign promise. The French farmers’ union and many French scientists in the fields of agronomy and agricultural sciences criticized the administration’s position. They publicly called out France’s position as non-scientific and politically motivated. According to media reports, the Minister for Environment and former green activist and journalist, Nicolas Hulot, threatened to resign if the President had not reaffirmed the three year limit on glyphosate use that President Macron announced earlier in the fall.

President Macron tasked the French Agricultural Research Institute (INRA) to present a report this month highlighting potential alternatives to the use of glyphosate. However, French scientists are almost united in stating that there is no simple alternative to glyphosate. Other chemicals, such as glyphosate ammonium, are also criticized and non-chemical methods, such as mechanical, are more time consuming, require more energy, and are more expensive. Economists from the French Grain Technical Institute (ARVALIS) calculated that the ban of glyphosate would add €10 per metric ton to

the production cost of wheat, about 7 percent of the sales price.

Facing increased production costs, French farmers highlighted that the ban would hamper their competitiveness as compared to other EU and non EU competitors that would still be allowed to use glyphosate. It would make French agricultural products costlier both domestically and abroad. FNSEA has already taken the opportunity of the glyphosate ban to link it to the CETA Canada – EU free trade agreement it opposes. It highlighted that Canada grains and oilseeds treated with glyphosate would be legally imported. FNSEA urged President Macron and French political leaders to add safeguard clauses in future free trade agreements that would prevent the imports of products treated with chemicals banned in France. Political representatives from the “France Insoumise” leftist party and the National Front Populist Party also said they supported a ban on imported goods using products not allowed for use in France.