

Circulation: NFU Online

Date: March 16

Contact: NFU HQ

Tel: 02476 858700

Glyphosate – draft text for inclusion in MEP letters

The NFU has prepared some points for inclusion should you wish to write to your MEP, feel free to use as much or as little depending on what is relevant to your farm business. Please do customise your letter or email to make it as personal as possible and add some real-life examples of how important glyphosate is to your business.

Potential introduction text:

- As a farmer (and member of the NFU – which represents around 47,000 farming businesses across England and Wales) – I am writing to you in order to express my concerns over the current debate over glyphosate renewal currently taking place in the European Parliament.
- Following a motion sent by the Environment Committee there is due to be a full European Parliament vote on the matter week commencing 11th April.
- The motion will ask the Commission to bring forward a new proposal covering the re-approval of glyphosate and for the reasons set out below I ask you to vote against this motion.

Background

- Glyphosate is the active substance in wide spectrum herbicides such as Round-up, and is used extensively in the amenity, home, garden and agricultural sectors.
- Within European agriculture glyphosate is for vital weed control at pre-planting or pre-emergence stages of crop production.
- In the UK glyphosate is also used before harvest to improve the harvesting process by helping speed up the ripening process of the crop, to manage weeds and to curb the emergence of weeds in the following season.
- Glyphosate is also used as part of grassland management to clear old grass sward, ahead of the vital process of re-seeding.

Personal experiences:

- Briefly describe your farm business - where and what you farm
- What you use glyphosate for and why it is important to your business – weed or blackgrass control, pre-harvest use, min/no till farming systems etc
- Impact of losing glyphosate on your business – lack of alternatives, changes to your rotation, return to tillage, resulting impacts on soil structure etc

Economics & wider industry impact

[ADAS](#) figures estimate that the loss of glyphosate would:

- Reduce UK production of winter wheat and winter barley by 12% and oilseed rape by 10%
- Reduction in the value of production of €633m per year for winter wheat, winter barley and winter oilseed rape.

Stewardship & Environment

- British farmers have an excellent level of stewardship when using crop protection products through engagement with programmes such as the Voluntary Initiative and Campaign for the Farmed Environment.
- Alongside this each farm is audited on an annual basis by Red Tractor to ensure standards relevant to crop protection are understood and applied correctly on farm.

- Farmers are also encouraged under the Sustainable Use Directive (SUD) to complete Integrated Pest Management Plans for farms.

Human health implications

- Glyphosate residues identified in food such as bread have become a focal point for NGO's advocating a ban on glyphosate applications, particularly use pre-harvest.
- However experience has shown by adhering to Good Agricultural Practice, any residues in the grain are well below those that would be expected by regulators.
- The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) assessment of glyphosate in November 2015 concluded that glyphosate is unlikely to pose a carcinogenic hazard to humans.

Potential Conclusion points

- It is with the above in mind that I ask you to reject the motion put forward to the European Parliament.
- If European and UK farmers are to meet the challenge of producing more to feed a growing population and to build resilience to climate change we must be armed with all the tools in the toolbox, and access to glyphosate is a vital part of this.
- Please find enclosed with this letter a briefing document setting out further background information and highlighting key benefits from using glyphosate.

