

Open letter for an EU-wide paraquat ban

To: The Member States' representatives of the Commission's Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health involved in examining active substances in plant protection products (Directive 91/414/EEC).

From: Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SNF), European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN-E)

Date: 8 April 2003

Dear Mrs/Mr,

We are writing this letter because we are highly concerned about the on-going discussions to include the herbicide paraquat¹ in Annex 1 to Council Directive 91/414/EEC at the next meeting of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health 14 – 15 April 2003.

Background

The work in the EU on examining active substances in plant protection products is in an intensive and important build-up phase where important policy decisions are being made, especially regarding Annex 1 (the positive list), which is creating the consensus needed for the future examination work. There are no specific criteria today for listing of active substances in the Annex. Instead, reference is made to general criteria (Article 5) of the Directive 91/414/EEC.

What's at stake?

The Commission is aware of the adverse health and ecological effects of the herbicide paraquat but still proposed an inclusion to Annex 1 on 2 December 2002 and 26 February 2003. However, several Member States openly rejected an inclusion and voting was postponed.

In addition, proposing inclusion of known very toxic pesticides, which has even shown to accumulate in soils, and considering the availability of safer alternatives discredits the whole assessment procedure and decreases public confidence.

Considering the serious health and ecological concerns, combined with the loss of public confidence, we strongly recommend the Member States' representatives at the next meeting of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (14 – 15 April 2003) to:

Vote for non-inclusion of paraquat to Annex 1 of the Council Directive 91/414/EEC and the withdrawal of authorisations for plant protection products containing this active substance.

¹ For more information please read the report Paraquat – Syngenta's controversial herbicide <http://skarv.snf.se/pdf/rap-jordbruk-syngenta02.pdf>

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely

Mikael Karlsson
President of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation



John Hontelez
Secretary General of the European Environmental Bureau



Carina Weber
Chair of Pesticide Action Network Europe

PAN Europe
Pesticides Action Network Europe