



Soil Association
Spear House,
51 Victoria Street,
Bristol, BS1 6AD

Wednesday 6th May

Rt Hon Emma Reynolds MP
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing as representatives of the undersigned organisations or concerned individuals whose work supports your ambition for more sustainable and resilient British farming.

We anticipate that as part of the agreement being developed towards a Common Sanitary and Phytosanitary Area with the European Union, novel UK restrictions will be placed on use of the herbicide glyphosate as a pre-harvest desiccant, in line with restrictions in place across Europe.

We support this direction of travel.

European restrictions have been introduced in the context of scientific and consumer concerns over public health, and on the understanding that pre-harvest desiccation does not represent a 'proper agricultural use' of glyphosate. We believe it would be prudent for the UK to follow suit.

Pre-harvest desiccation is the primary cause of glyphosate residues in foods. These residues are commonly found in oats, barley, wheat and beans, and research into genotoxicity and the potential impact on human health is ongoing. The impacts of glyphosate on biodiversity and ecosystems are also well documented.

Phasing out glyphosate as a pre-harvest desiccant, in line with restrictions across the EU, would alleviate concerns over public health and nature, while facilitating closer trade with our European neighbours. Such a move would also help realise the ambitions of the UK Pesticides National Action Plan 2025, which encourages integrated pest management (IPM) and alternative approaches or techniques to reduce dependency on the use of pesticides.

We emphasise that farmers may need help to adapt. Those currently using glyphosate as a desiccant may need support to adopt alternatives while ensuring their businesses can continue to thrive. Both the government and the supply chain have an important role to play in this regard.



We therefore urge you to ensure the Farming Roadmap and associated agri-environmental schemes adequately incentivise integrated pest management, organic farming and nature-friendly production. In addition, we recommend investment in R&D for non-chemical desiccation methods; funding for independent advisory services that help farmers implement new techniques; government decision-making based on independent science; and attention given to the potential need for transition grants to support farmers to adapt.

We strongly encourage you to end the use of glyphosate as a pre-harvest desiccant. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these proposals directly.

Yours faithfully,

Helen Browning, CEO, Soil Association

Martin Lines, CEO, Nature-Friendly Farming Network

Richard Benwell, CEO, Wildlife and Countryside Link

Guy Singh-Watson, Founder, Riverford Organic Farmers Ltd

Prof Michael Antoniou, Professor Emeritus in Molecular Genetics and Toxicology

Nina Schrank, Nature Campaign lead, Greenpeace UK

Dr Andrew Impey, CEO, Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Kathy Wormald, CEO, Froglife

Craig Macadam, Co-Leader and Director of Conservation, Buglife

Russel Hobson, Director of Science and Data, Butterfly Conservation

Fiona Taylor, CEO, Garden Organic

Vicki Hird, Strategic Lead on Agriculture, The Wildlife Trusts

Cóilín Nunan, Policy and Science Manager, Alliance to Save our Antibiotics

Nick Mole, Policy Manager, Pesticide Action Network UK

Jyoti Fernandes, Campaigns Coordinator, Landworkers' Alliance

Kate Metcalf, Co-director, WEN (Women's Environment Network)

Paul de Zylva, Senior Analyst, Friends of the Earth

Eve Gleeson, Interim Senior Research Manager – Biodiversity, ShareAction

Clare Perry, Climate Campaign Leader, Environmental Investigation Agency

Jenny Hawley, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Plantlife

Emma Loder-Symonds, Director and Owner, Nonington Farms

Robert Barbour, Senior Research, Sustainable Food Trust

Alicia Hurrell, Charity Manager, MCS-Aware

Rebecca Sunter, Interim Executive Director, Eating Better

Suzy Russell, Network Coordinator, Community Supported Agriculture

Dr Simon Stott, Director of Research, Cure Parkinson's

Chris Young, Real Bread Campaign Coordinator, Sustain

