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Sustainable use of pesticides The consumers perspective

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A) Consumers demands & expectations (1)



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- Application and use of **as low quantities** of pesticides as possible
 - preferably **no use of pesticides** on agricultural produce
 - so, their **residues on our food and environment** to be very low or zero
 - Within this spirit Civil society organizations from across the EU* have submitted a proposal to the European Commission for a **European Citizens' Initiative** (ECI) calling for new legislation to **phase out pesticides**, restore **biodiversity** and support farmers

- If pesticides are used must be of low toxicity
 - preferably use of low toxicity (non carcinogenic, non endocrine disruptive, non immunotoxic etc.) **nonchemical pesticides** e.g., **biological agents** and
 - nonchemical methods to control plant diseases and protect plants.



*European networks Friends of the Earth Europe, the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) etc.

A) Consumers demands & expectations (2)



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- High level of protection of our **Health, Environment** (soil, water , air...) and **biodiversity including bees⁺**, from the use of high quantities of pesticides.
- Especially the case of **aerial spraying**- **must be completely prohibited** .
- Further protection of **agricultural and industrial workers** from the application and production of hazardous pesticides



+Relevant action by European Professional Beekeepers' Association

A) Consumers demands & expectations (3)

- Implementation of a really **holistic approach**, as it is visioned by the new EU Farm to Fork Strategy (2020-2023 rev) and Green Deal e.g. Reduction of use of chemical pesticides by 50% and **25 % of total farmland** being used **for organic farming by 2030**.

E.g., consumers expect that the **Glyphosate**, a possible carcinogen by IARC, stopped to be used in the EU after 15 December 2022, as is officially declared*.

The **consumers concerns** about the use of pesticides and their residues in food, are mirrored by the results of **Eurobarometer** on food safety 2019 and previous editions, where is shown that 65% of EU citizens concern and worry about pesticides residues in food and especially in Cyprus this figure is 80%.

* <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/glyphosate>



B) Proposals on how to be achieved these demands (1)



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- Implementation of **IPM** (Integrated Pest Management) by
 - Strict monitoring and control by the - Competent Authorities (CA) of MS and relevant Audit by the EC must be done
- Encouragement and economical motives by the Governments must be given for the agricultural production of **organic products, including livestock**
 - so as, these products **not to be expensive** for the consumers, but also for the producers . For example, in Cyprus, a small MS, these products are expensive, and the livestock is restricted only to chicken and organic eggs.



B) Proposals on how to be achieved these demands(2)



- Further training and economic support to the producers is needed, to use pesticides of low toxicity and relevant stricter control must be done ,that the farmers **use them according to the label directions** i.e., the proper pesticides for the proper plant and not other uses (e.g., the problem with fipronil in eggs) and proper harvesting time
- Further encouragements of industry to produce of low toxicity/**nonchemical pesticides and alternative biological agents.**
- The work of EU's system (EC/EFSA & MS) for risk assessment and evaluation of pesticides' safety is important but could be accelerated by further cooperation.



C) EC and MS role—in relation to consumers expectations & demands

- The planned revision of the Sustainable Use of pesticides Directive (SUD) 2009/128/EC is welcomed, but consumers need further simple information and stricter provisions & implementation of SUD and relevant EU legislation.
- Why not in the future to turn SUD to a Regulation
- All the previously mentioned consumers expectations, must be fulfilled by strict monitoring , control & audits in relation to:
 - the use of permitted low toxicity/ nonchemical pesticides,
 - supporting the use of new technologies against pests,
 - encourage of organic farming- especially for livestock must be covered by more strict legislation
 - restriction on the number of different pesticides used , so as to avoid cocktails of toxic chemical mixtures and their possible synergistic effect on our health, biodiversity and environment-> problem of multiresidues in the same food.



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D) Conclusions

In summary consumers expectations and demands are :

1. **Stricter provisions & application of SUD** directive and relevant legislation in relation to nonchemical pesticides, alternative biological agents, lower quantities and number of different pesticides used, avoiding toxic cocktails & **Increase organic farming**
2. More clear and **simple information** which is more easily understandable by the consumers.
3. **Consumers must have access to healthy, affordable and sustainable food**-> Healthier consumers and lower burdening of health system and economy
4. Healthier and sustainable environment, preservation of natural resources biodiversity and tackling climate change .

All these are towards saving of our planet and the next generations!

Thank you very much for your attention!

