Statistics on pesticides

2006/0258(COD) - 03/03/2017 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents a report on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1185/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning statistics on pesticides.

The Regulation stipulates that the Member States have to transmit annually to the Commission their statistical data on pesticides placed on the market each year. In addition, they have to provide statistics on pesticides used in agriculture (pesticide use statistics) in five-year periods.

The report notes that all Member States, Switzerland and Norway are compliant on the coverage and timeliness of their data. Most countries provide their data sets on time and react in a spirit of good cooperation when further checks or corrections are required.

Information received from stakeholders: consultations with relevant Commission's services and agencies have brought forward the following important points for consideration:

any legislation on pesticides statistics should cater for harmonised risk indicators, which the Commission has to draw up under the Sustainable Use Directive, and should facilitate the calculation of risk indicators ‘by using the statistical data collected’;

it is difficult to collect meaningful data on pesticides use from farmers. The legislation should be adapted so that figures aggregated at a lower level can be released, as they could be needed for calculating risk indicators;

it is essential that policymakers are able to quantify the risk and the level of pesticide pollution;

pesticide statistics are too aggregated to effectively inform environmental risk assessment. The only way to effectively combine hazard data with data on exposure in order to understand risk is to have data on the application rates for specific active substances in pesticides by crop, area and ecosystem type;

should pesticides statistics become available at a sufficient level of detail, they could be extremely useful for conducting retrospective risk assessments of the actual levels of risk expected from the overall use of pesticides in the EU, for human and animal health, and the environment;

a balance between confidentiality and the relevance or usefulness of the data could be achieved by exploring different aggregation options, for example based on toxicity and use patterns.

Pesticide sales statistics: the Commission considers that all primary pesticide sales data is accurate and reliable.

Pesticide sales data provides a good quality estimate of the total quantity of pesticide products placed on the market on a national basis. It can show trends in new types of pesticides, quantities of products over time and the subsequent risks for people and the environment.

Many users would like to obtain detailed data on the volumes of individual active substances sold. However, neither the Commission nor the national statistics institutes can provide this information, as they have to comply with the Regulation and the confidentiality rules.

The Regulation is very restrictive in how the Commission may disseminate the data. All data has to be aggregated into classes and groups, regardless of whether or not the data is deemed confidential by the Member States. Taking into account the opinion of the relevant stakeholders, the Commission considers it important to further **adapt the legislation on pesticides sales, so that all data that is not confidential can be made available to the public** both as active substance, as well as in different forms of aggregation.

Pesticide use statistics: the first data on the agricultural use of pesticides was transmitted to the Commission at the end of 2015. To date, due to the very large volume of complex data, it has not been possible to fully process the data. The Regulation provides that each Member State has to decide on a selection of crops to be covered during the five-year reference period that is representative of the crops cultivated in that Member State and of the substances used. However, the choice of crops has been quite diverse. This has led to a situation where there is a risk that it will not be possible to fully compare data on pesticide use on crops between countries.

Furthermore, the reference period has to be a maximum of 12 months covering all plant protection treatments during a five-year period. Member States may choose the reference period at any time of the five-year period. This has led to a situation where countries have chosen different reference periods and thus it will not be possible to compare data for the same year between countries, nor to give any EU-level results.

Accordingly, the Commission considers it equally important to adapt the legislation on pesticides use statistics to ensure a more consistent approach and coverage across the Member States. This could include **specified common reference periods and clear coverage requirements for the crops** to be surveyed.

The coverage rules could be based on the crop production statistics and on analyses of the potential risks to environment and human health, based on the sales of active substances. These rules would be set up in close collaboration between the relevant Commission's services and national experts.

a strategy for agricultural statistics for 2020 and beyond provides that all agricultural statistics, except the economic accounts for agriculture, should be grouped under two framework regulations. The Commission strongly recommends that pesticide statistics should be also **merged** with the other agricultural statistics domains.