

Fork is the solution to EU food concerns – not the problem. S&D supports reduction of ppp use. She also flagged the need to ensure that all MS are on board – including those with very high ppp use. She took the opportunity to urge continued COM action to improve animal welfare.

Emma Wiesner (Renew, SE) in joining the welcome for the proposal, focussed on food security. She said that the ongoing study on food security should have been done prior to adoption. She also suggested that the proposal takes a one-size-fits-all approach to MS, noting that SE uses one fifth of the average EU ppp use.

Sarah Wiener (Greens, AT) appreciated the adoption, in the face of opposition of the agriculture sector and some Member States. Indicators are the key to proper implementation and organic farmers must not be disadvantaged. She called for binding measures on Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Anja Hazekamp (The Left, NL) completed the round of welcomes for the proposal, citing the negative effects of ppps on biodiversity and pollinators. She criticised the use of the term ‘plant protection products’ rather than ‘pesticides’. She welcomed the ban on use in sensitive areas, but said that a three metre buffer zone is insufficient. She also said that the removal from the system of candidates for substitution is not working.

There were no speakers from ID or ECR during this round.

In her response, **Commissioner**:

- thanked Members for their support for Farm to Fork and in particular Commission’s work on ppps
- informed that the impact assessment for the SUR proposal takes full account of all available relevant studies and modelling.
- clarified that there will be no ban on use of ppps – rather an intensification of efforts to reduce use and use alternatives. New technologies, such as drone sprayers can help here.
- assured that changes will be made overnight, but will happen gradually. Food sustainability and food security go hand in hand. It is possible to reduce ppp use without impacting on yield or quality. She recalled the study announced last week on the drivers of food insecurity.
- insisted that all Member States must play their part in reaching the targets and said that methodology will be used to take individual starting points into account. She referred to aspects of the proposal such as mandatory record-keeping, expert input and crop-specific profiles.
- replied that definition of the buffer zones for sensitive areas is based on scientific data.
- assured MEP Guteland that animal welfare remains a personal, as well as a COM priority.

Second round – Committee Members

Pernilla Weiss (EPP, DK) noted with approval the national plans for ppp use as well as the targets, success for which will hinge on implementation. She called for faster approval procedures for lower risk products

Sara Cerdas (S&D, PT) referenced (unnamed) studies showing an increase in residues of the most harmful ppps. 70% of EU soils are in an unhealthy state and crop rotation must be promoted in all MS.

Jan Huiteima (Renew, NL) highlighted another reason for reducing ppp use: dependence on third countries for inputs. New techniques, such as multi-cropping, micro-organisms and NGTs should be promoted and supported. He advised looking at yield per hectare when comparing use rates.

Christine Schneider (EPP, DE) welcomed the proposal but regretted lack of an impact assessment on food security associated with Farm to Fork. She underlined that all MS must play their part and mentioned the potential for NGTs.

Bas Eickhout (Greens, NL) asked about the consequences for MS that don't make sufficient efforts. It's not clear what tools are available to the COM in this case. He said that there should be a hierarchy of alternatives to ensure that ppps use is really a last resort.

Ljudmila Novak (EPP, SI) highlighted geographical and agricultural differences between Member States and called for a decrease in burden on farmers.

Martin Hojsik (Renew, SK) supported the use of integrated pest management (IPM) and agreed that a hierarchy of alternative measures is necessary. He asked why the proposal does not include mandatory monitoring of pollinators.

Mick Wallace (The Left, IE) recalled the Save the Bees petition, and asked if reduction targets could be more ambitious. He also asked about definition of sensitive areas and queried the accuracy of the indicators.

Veronique Trillet-Lenoir (Renew, FR) noted the general support in the Committee, emphasised the need to strike a balance between circumstances in different MS and highlighted the importance of focussing on environmental health.

Edina Toth (NI, HU) supported the proposal but cautioned on increasing burdens on farmers right now, also asking about an impact assessment

Commissioner:

- agreed with members that alternatives are essential and must be facilitated in reaching the market. This proposal will promote quicker approval of low risk substances and incentivise their development.
- insisted that despite flexibility, all MS will have to play their part in reaching the targets. No MS will be allowed to reduce by less than 35% and all will be subject to monitoring. COM will step in if efforts are inadequate. Member State specificities will be taken into account.
- informed that on adoption of the proposal, she wrote to Member State Ministers urging their support. Food sustainability and food security must go hand in hand.
- recalled that a proposal on NGTs will be made next year and agreed that we must make the most of scientific developments.
- reminded that CAP support for implementation will be available for implementation during a five-year transition period. This proposal will also support occupational health of farmers, who must work with the ppps.
- briefly recalled the ongoing work on development of the Bee Guidance Document.
- closed by emphasising that now is the right time for this proposal. It is ambitious, realistic and achievable.

Kind regards,
DG SANTE EP TEAM





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