

THE EUROPEAN GOLF ASSOCIATION GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE

EU PESTICIDES DIRECTIVES FACT SHEET

The Directives and key issues

On 13 January 2009, the European Parliament adopted a compromise package on pesticide legislation. The package, which included the revision of the Directive for the placing of plant protection products on the market and the Framework Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides, was overwhelmingly approved by the European Parliament. The Parliament has thereby agreed on a compromise set with the Council (Member States) in December.

Pesticides Registration – revision of Directive 91/414

This Directive requires that all plant protection products need to be evaluated and authorised before being placed on the market. A hazard-based approach for granting authorisations has been introduced, leading to tougher controls on neurotoxic, immunotoxic and endocrine disrupting substances. There will also be a ban on active ingredients that are carcinogenic, mutagenic or reprotoxic (CMRs) and persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBTs), and those that are harmful to honeybees. A Swedish study has identified twenty two active substances likely to be removed from the market due to their effects to human health and the environment.

Thematic Strategy on the sustainable use of pesticides

The final text of the Framework Directive refers to a prohibition or restriction of the use of pesticides in “sensitive areas”, such as sports grounds. This critical point for the use of pesticides in “sensitive areas” is that when referring to the “Reduction of pesticide use or risks in specific areas”, the text specifies the minimisation, and not just prohibition, of the use of pesticides. Furthermore, there is reference that “Appropriate risk management measures shall be taken and the use of low-risk plant protection products and biological control measures shall be considered in the first place”.

There is also strong emphasis on the development of National Action Plans to implement the Framework Directive, which will include quantitative reductions in pesticide use and the need for Member States to “describe how they ensure the implementation of the principles of Integrated Pest Management, with priority given wherever possible to non-chemical methods of plant protection and pest and crop management, in their National Action Plan.”

Impact on golf

Pesticides Registration Directive 91/414

This will reduce the range of pesticides that are available, with 2,4-D, carbendazim, deltamethrin, iprodione and prochloraz among those under threat. It will, however, ensure that all pesticides on the EU market will be compatible for environment and health.

Thematic Strategy on the sustainable use of pesticides

There is the potential for strict rules on the use of pesticides on golf courses if national governments implement the most stringent wording of the Framework Directive. At the very least, there will be quantitative reductions in pesticide use and the need to demonstrate the implementation of the principles of Integrated Pest Management.

The EGA GCC position

To support the minimal use of pesticides on golf courses whilst accepting that they are necessary tools for the course manager, if only to be used as a last resort. To promote the implementation of Integrated Pest Management, with primary focus being on the right grass selection and cultural management to minimise the risk from diseases, pests and weeds. Recommend that courses keep accurate and detailed records of pesticide use, preferably using The R&A's free and anonymous benchmarking service at bestcourseforgolf.org

More information on means of minimising pesticide use and Integrated Pest Management is available at www.bestcourseforgolf.org

Recommended action

The European Golf Association Golf Course Committee (EGA GCC) will keep you informed of developments at the EU.

The EGA GCC recommends that you engage with the authorities in charge of phytopharmaceuticals within your national government, ideally on a collective basis as demonstrated by the members of the EGA GCC. Monitor the impact of these Directives and advise interested parties in your own country as to the legislation and its likely impact on their courses.

Work with national government on the National Action Plan to protect the game from overly stringent legislation. Build up a profile of pesticide use on golf courses in your country, preferably by promoting the use of the free and anonymous benchmarking service on The R&A bestcourseforgolf.org website, to ensure that engagement is based on a solid base of knowledge.

