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Pesticides used in organic farming: Some pass and some fail safety authorisation

Nearly half of the pesticides listed for use by organic farmers under the EU's Organic Regulation¹ have not passed their safety evaluation under the EU's review under Directive 91/414/EEC. This will present a new challenge to both organic farmers who have few options in their fight against pests and to the crop protection industry which provides their pest management solutions.

The EU has, however, authorised a number of pesticides commonly used in organic farming under the framework of the EU's review of plant protection active substances. These include copper hydroxide, copper oxide, copper oxychloride, copper sulphate and Bordeaux mixture (copper sulphate and calcium hydroxide) which are used as bactericides and fungicides. These are particularly important for grapes and a number of other crops sold as organic.

“The approval of these compounds provides some important tools for European farmers in combating pests and, in particular, for the growers of products marketed as organic,” said Friedhelm Schmider, Director General of the European Crop Protection Association.

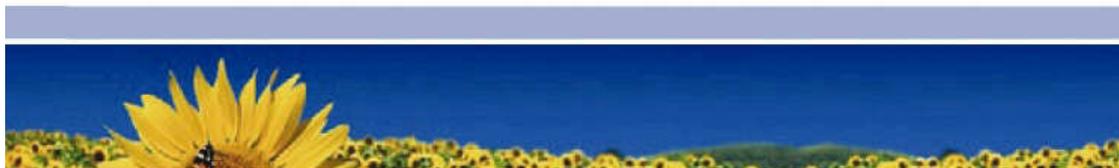
The EU review of active substances has resulted in the loss of a multitude of substances and now many of the pesticides used by organic farmers. Chemical compounds based on copper and sulphur are some of the key fungicides available for organic use and there are also a number of important insecticides.

“The crop protection industry provides a full variety of plant protection products, both chemical and biological, that are safe for use in all types of farming,” said Schmider. ***“The industry continues to look for new solutions that meet both the EU's standards for plant protection products and our food supply needs.”***

“We are concerned, however, about sustaining Europe's ability to maintain a sufficient and affordable food supply if too many pest management solutions are lost too quickly. Crop production losses, price increases and pest resistance are a few of the possibilities we have highlighted. Great care and due diligence will be required in the implementation of this legislation if European agriculture is to reliably produce the food required to maintain our quality of life,” added Schmider.

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¹ As listed in Annex II of Regulation 889/2008 of 5 September 2008



Substances	Approved	Non-approved
Substances of crop or animal origin:		
Azadirachtin		x
Gelatine		x
Hydrolysed proteins	x	
Lecithin		x
mint oil	x	
pine oil		x
Pyrethrins	x	
Quassia		x
Rotenone		x
Substances produced by micro-organisms:		
Spinosad	x	
Substances to be used in traps and/or dispensers:		
Diammonium phosphate		x
Pheromones	x	
Deltamethrin	x	
Lambdacyhalothrin	x	
Preparations to be surface-spread between cultivated plants:		
Ferric phosphate	x	
Other substances from traditional use in organic farming:		
Copper	x	
Ethylene	x	
Fatty acid potassium salt		x
Aluminium sulphate		x
Calcium polysulphide		x
Paraffin oil		x
Mineral oils		x
Potassium permanganate		x
Quartz sand	x	
Sulphur	x	
Calcium hydroxide	x	
Potassium hydrogen carbonate	x	
TOTAL:	14	13

The European Crop Protection Association (ECPA) represents the crop protection industry interests at European level. Its members include all major companies and national associations across Europe. For more information: www.ecpa.eu.

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