

Proposed Strategy for Hop Industry Response to European Union Farm and Food Policies

What is the Issue?

The European Commission (EC) unveiled its Farm to Fork (F2F) and Biodiversity Strategies in May 2020 as part of the European Green Deal. These strategies impose restrictions on European Union (EU) agriculture through targeted reductions in the use of land, fertilizers, antimicrobials, and pesticides by 2030 (see figure below). The F2F and Biodiversity Strategies represents a fundamental shift in EU food and agriculture policy, with correspondingly fundamental implications for the structure and productivity of the EU food and agriculture industry. As the EU is a major agricultural producer and participant in international agricultural trade, this policy shift is likely to affect international markets for agricultural commodities and, consequently, the broader food and agriculture system.

European Green Deal - Farm to Fork Strategy



The F2F Strategy sets out an agenda for “a fair, healthy, and environmentally friendly food system which requires efforts of all actors, including consumers, to adapt to new and stricter health, environmental and animal welfare standards.”

The sustainability of food systems is a global issue and the EU acting alone cannot successfully address the global threats related to the way the food is produced and consumed. The F2F Strategy sets out the EU ambition to become a global leader in food sustainability through its international cooperation on food research and innovation, by building partnerships, by promoting standards supporting sustainable practices at international level and through its trade and development policies.

The EU is the world’s biggest exporter and the third biggest importer of agri-food products. As an important player on international food markets, the EU has a considerable impact on non-EU countries through its trade policy and ability to influence the development of regulations and standards of global significance. The EU trade policy can be used to increase awareness of

the high standards of EU agri-food products outside the EU and to promote the transition towards sustainable food systems globally. Combatting climate change and environmental degradation is among top priorities for the EU.

Impact on the International Hop Industry:

The EU pesticide policy classifies substances under health and environmental criteria according to its hazard-based methodology. If a substance falls under one of these criteria, it is cut-off from a full assessment that would also consider exposure in its review. This policy has greatly affected the approval of pesticides within the European Union and often their corresponding MRLs. To date over a dozen pesticides utilized in hop production have not been renewed with the loss of additional important tools expected in the future.

International Hop Industry Strategies to Address EU Farm and Food Policies:

1. Monitor EU regulatory activity and maintain a high level of communication with registrants to ensure knowledge of anticipated MRL revisions as early as possible.
2. Submit official hop industry comments to EU regulatory officials when appropriate to seek more reasonable timelines to adjust to regulatory changes.
3. Meet with EU regulatory officials in Brussels to seek longer phase-in timelines to allow research and development of new plant protection strategies.
4. Seek emergency use authorization in the European country when a crop protection product is deemed critical to address a pest issue and alternatives are either not available or do not provide the efficacy needed.
5. Engage with Member State national governments to influence the European Commission and European Parliament on pesticide policies.
6. Challenge the European Union's position that environmental factors should be considered when evaluating MRLs or for import tolerance requests from third countries.
7. Stress the European Union's obligations under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement to consider risk when evaluating pesticide approvals.
8. Stress the continued use of a risk-based approach during Codex pesticide evaluations and limit consideration of environmental factors when establishing Codex MRLs.