

Friends of the Earth press release

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WAITROSE BANS SUPPLIERS FROM USING BEE-HARMING PESTICIDES

The campaign to restrict the use of pesticides linked to bee decline was given a huge boost today when supermarket chain Waitrose banned suppliers from using neonicotinoid insecticides. The move follows discussion between the supermarket chain and Friends of the Earth.

Waitrose is the latest retailer to act on three neonicotinoids linked by the European Food Safety Authority to bee decline. Over recent weeks leading home and garden retailers, such as B&Q, Homebase and Wyvale have removed neonicotinoid chemicals from their shelves, following campaigning by Friends of the Earth.

Friends of the Earth's Head of Campaigns Andrew Pendleton said:

"This is fantastic news – Waitrose is the latest major retailer to take action on pesticides linked to bee decline.

"There is mounting concern about the damaging impact these chemicals have on bees and other pollinators - we urge other stores to follow suit.

"Ministers can't ignore the mounting concern from scientists, businesses and the public – they must back EU proposals to restrict these insecticides later this month.

"But pesticides are not the only challenge facing British bees – the Government must introduce a Bee Action Plan to tackle habitat loss and all the other threats they face.

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Notes to editors

1. Waitrose is asking suppliers of fruit, vegetables and flowers to avoid the use of three formulations of neonicotinoid based pesticides on crops destined for the supermarket. The move comes in light of concerns about their effects on bees, butterflies and other important pollinators. The move is part of a 'Seven Point Plan for Pollinators' that begins immediately.

Farmers supplying Waitrose are to stop using three systemic formulations of neonicotinoids by the end of 2014 at the latest. The three formulations - imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiamethoxam - will no longer be used on crops attractive to bees and other pollinators. The restriction on use is a precautionary measure and will remain in place until scientists can demonstrate conclusively whether or not the formulations are adversely affecting populations of pollinator insects.

2. Numerous home and garden retailers have banned neonicotinoid insecticides following campaigning by Friends of the Earth.

https://www.foe.co.uk/news/gov_neonicotinoid_39549.html

3. Friends of the Earth's The Bee Cause campaign is supporting individuals to make change in their gardens and communities to help bees, and asking the Prime Minister to commit to a National Bee Action Plan. To support the call to David Cameron and find out what else you can do to help bees, visit The Bee Cause webpage www.foe.co.uk/bees.

4. For more than 40 years we've seen that the wellbeing of people and planet go hand in hand – and it's been the inspiration for our campaigns. Together with thousands of people like you we've secured safer food and water, defended wildlife and natural habitats, championed the move to clean energy and acted to keep our climate stable. Be a Friend of the Earth – see things differently. For further information visit www.foe.co.uk.