

## France moves step closer to total ban on neonicotinoid pesticides

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French lawmakers approved plans for a total ban on some widely used pesticides blamed for harming bees, going beyond European Union restrictions in a fierce debate that has pitched farmers and chemical firms against beekeepers and green groups.

The EU limited the use of neonicotinoid chemicals, produced by companies including Bayer CropScience and Syngenta, two years ago after research pointed to risks for bees, which play a crucial role pollinating crops.

Crop chemical makers say the research blaming neonicotinoid pesticides is not backed up by field evidence and a global plunge in bee numbers in recent years is a complex phenomenon due to multiple factors.

Farmer groups, meanwhile, say no viable alternatives exist and a full ban would put France at a disadvantage to other crop producing countries in the EU.

The outright ban on neonicotinoid pesticides was adopted by a narrow majority late on [March 17] by France's National Assembly, as part of a draft bill on biodiversity that also contains an additional tax on palm oil.

The measure, however, would not come into effect until Sept. 1, 2018, later than the January 2017 deadline previously proposed by some lawmakers.

The proposed neonicotinoid ban still needs to be pass before the French Senate, which rejected it in a previous reading, before a final vote in the National Assembly expected in the middle of the year.

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Bayer said the parliamentary vote was a setback for farmers.

"Some farmers are going to find themselves in a dead-end regarding crop protection ... and could see their harvests fall by 15 to 40 percent depending on the crop," it said in a statement.

**Read full, original post:** [France moves toward full ban on pesticides blamed for harming bees](#)