

'Maladapted' EU regulation hinders non-toxic biopesticide development, despite growing farmer demand

Biological pesticides are rapidly gaining attention as a sustainable and viable environmentally friendly alternative to chemical pesticides. However, they are currently hampered by maladapted regulation.

As the harmful effects of chemical pesticides have increasingly become a cause for concern, the reduction of pesticide use has been put high on the political agenda [in Europe].

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Biological pesticides are a form of biocontrol based on living organisms, which includes microbial pesticides based on bacteria or fungi as the active ingredient. These living organisms are naturally pathogenic to or out-compete pests.

Biocontrol technologies are becoming an increasingly more important addition to the farmers' toolbox, helping them ensure the future sustainability of the crop sector.

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However, although there are various incentives in Europe to promote the commercialization and use of biopesticides, there is a lack of specific regulation regarding products based on microorganisms they generally follow the same regulatory path as chemicals.

Anika Gatt Seretny, senior communications manager at [European Crop Protection Association], concurred, telling EURACTIV that nearly 40% of all new actives that have been put on the market since regulation 1107 took effect have been biopesticides but that the "poor execution of the 1107 timelines has clearly hindered the development of biopesticides".

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