The Danish Environmental Protection Agency bans 23 pesticides

The Danish Environmental Protection Agency is withdrawing the approval of 23 pesticides because the products contain active ingredients that can form and leach TFA into groundwater. Pesticides that are approved for use in Denmark must not pose a risk to our groundwater.

July 7, 2025

In 2025, the Danish Environmental Protection Agency has taken six active substances and thus 33 pesticides up for re-evaluation. This has been done on the basis of the research project "TriFluPest", which was initiated by the Danish Environmental Protection Agency and carried out by the National Geological Survey of Denmark & Greenland (GEUS), as well as other professional knowledge, including from ongoing EU assessments. These are the following active substances: fluazinam, fluopyram, diflufenican, mefentrifluconazole and tau-fluvalinate, as well as flonicamid.

The Danish Environmental Protection Agency's assessment, including a hearing with relevant companies, has now resulted in the Danish Environmental Protection Agency deciding to withdraw the approval of 23 pesticides, nine of which are currently marketed in Denmark. The reason for the ban is that the pesticides contain one of the six active ingredients that form TFA (trifluoroacetic acid), which is a very slowly degradable substance that leaches into groundwater. The Danish Environmental Protection Agency expects to be able to make decisions in the remaining ten cases during August-September, as the Danish Environmental Protection Agency expects to have sufficient

evidence at that time, including clarifications on alternatives and the economic consequences of a ban.

In recent years, extensive findings of the substance TFA have been shown in groundwater. Source tracing has shown a significant contribution from a number of industrial applications, such as coolants and propellants in spray cans, which contribute to TFA being found in rainwater, and thus contribute to the content of TFA in groundwater. Certain pesticides have also been shown to be a source of TFA. The EU's risk assessments for pesticides used in Denmark have not previously contained information on TFA, but the research project from GEUS, combined with new assessments from the EU, has now shown that TFA is formed from the above active substances and leached into the groundwater.

The decisions mean that the use of a number of pesticides containing one of the active substances will be prohibited in six months and 15 months respectively. The specific implementation deadlines for the decisions can be seen here .

The closure deadlines are set by the Danish Environmental Protection Agency based on a specific assessment of each individual remedy, where the consideration for the protection of the environment, based on a proportionality consideration, is weighed against the consideration for the socio-economic consequences. In cases where there are either alternatives or remedies that have not been sold for a number of years, the economic considerations are given less weight. The consideration for the protection of the environment, including groundwater, is always given high weight in Denmark when the closure deadlines are to be set. In relation to setting closure deadlines, the Danish Environmental Protection Agency has in some of the cases assumed that these are very special cases that have very large socio-economic consequences.

Potato production in particular is expected to be hit hard, with the consequences largely depending on whether the production of starch potatoes can continue. Starch potatoes are used as potato flour in a wide range of products in the food industry.

The background for the ban on the pesticides in question is the protection of Danish groundwater, as the new information in the "TriFluPest" report and new EU assessments show the formation of the degradation product TFA from the active substances in question.

Facts about TFA

Trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) is a strong acid that is highly water-soluble, binds weakly to soil, and is largely non-degradable.

TFA is an ultra-short-chain PFAS compound with just a single fluorine-containing group (CF3), in contrast to the long-chain and very problematic PFAS and PFOA substances.

Active ingredients that contain TFA in their chemical structure are popularly called PFAS pesticides.

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ADDRESS

Danish Environmental Protection Agency
Lerchesgade 35
5000 Odense C
See all our offices

The Danish Environmental Protection Agency can be contacted via:
mst@mst.dk
72 54 40 00

Opening hours:
Monday-Thursday 8:30-16:00
Friday 8:30-15:00

EAN: See info
CVR: 25798376

CONTACT

For general inquiries, you can contact the Danish Environmental Protection Agency's information center:
info@mst.dk
72 54 44 66

Opening hours:
Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-16:00

The Danish Environmental Protection Agency's press contact

The Danish Environmental Protection Agency's emergency service: 20 35 21 94

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