
OPEN LETTER

to the candidates of the democratic parties for the German
Bundestag Election 2021

August 2021

Broad alliance calls on next German government to become active in phasing out the use of synthetic chemical pesticides!

Dear Sir or Madam,

chemical synthetic pesticides cannot only kill bees and wild plants and harm humans, they can also pollute drinking water, our food and affect soil life. In short: **chemical synthetic pesticides contribute significantly to the loss of biodiversity.**

Furthermore, climate change poses ever increasing challenges to the current form of agriculture due to extreme weather events. It is therefore even more important to ensure soil health, an intact animal, plant, fungal and microbial world, clean air to breathe and the supply of non-toxic food. On the way to a socio-ecological and climate-friendly transformation of agriculture and the food system, it is absolutely essential to phase out chemical synthetic pesticides.

Thus, the organisations contributing to this alliance urge you, today, to push **during the coming legislative period** for a gradual **phasing out of chemical synthetic pesticides by 2035 and ban the most concerning pesticides** for health and environment within the next five years at a national and EU level!

In our view, concrete steps to achieve this are:

1. Improvement of the pesticide approval process

It has been established that pesticide cocktails in the air can be found in all regions of Germany, including national parks, city centres and organic fields. A study found more than 130 agricultural poisons in all regions of Germany; a third of which are banned in Germany.¹ However, the transport of pesticides via air is not sufficiently taken into account during the approval process of the active substances and the end-product. To improve the approval process, we generally support the requirements of the 'Citizens for Science in Pesticide Regulation'.² In this open letter, we would like to draw particular attention to the problems of long-range transport of pesticides via air and the harmful effects of pesticides on humans and the environment. We therefore demand that the behaviour of all pesticide active substances and agents is to be investigated under **real-life conditions in the range of 20m to 1,000km from the potential source** and considered in the approval process. Such a review must be applied to all new active substances, as well as carried out retrospectively by 2024 for those previously authorised.

We also call for independent scientific studies to be considered in the approval process, particularly studies relating to the harmful effects of pesticides on the environment, such as studies that explore the connection between pesticides and biodiversity-loss, the damage to eco-systems and health risks of multiple substances combined ("cocktail-effect"). Where there is insufficient data on the harmful effects of pesticides, in particular within the area of **health risks due to the inhalation of** chemical synthetic pesticides via the air, we demand - in accordance with the precautionary principle - that **pesticides, which have not been proven to remain exclusively on fields, must be banned**.

2. Immediate restriction of use

In the study Pesticide pollution of the air (2020)³, the substances **glyphosate, pendimethalin, prosulfocarb and terbuthylazine** were found most frequently and furthest away from their origin source. Thus, we demand an immediate review of these substances (and all products containing them) on a national and EU-level regarding long-range transport.

¹ Kruse-Plaß, M., Schlechtriemen, U., Wosniok, W. (2020): Pesticide pollution of the air – a Germany-wide study to determine the pollution of the air with the help of technical collectors, bee bread, filters from aeration plants and air quality bark monitoring with regard to the occurrence of pesticide active substances, in particular glyphosate. Client: Bündnis für eine enkeltaugliche Landwirtschaft e. V. and Umweltinstitut München e. V. Available at: <https://www.enkeltauglich.bio/studie>

² Citizens for Science in Pesticide Regulation (2018): Ensuring a higher level of protection from pesticides in Europe. Available at: https://citizens4pestidereform.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/White-Paper_Dec2018.pdf

³ Kruse-Plaß, M., Schlechtriemen, U., Wosniok, W. (2020): Pesticide pollution of the air – a Germany-wide study to determine the pollution of the air with the help of technical collectors, bee bread, filters from aeration plants and air quality bark monitoring with regard to the occurrence of pesticide active substances, in particular glyphosate. Client: Bündnis für eine enkeltaugliche Landwirtschaft e. V. and Umweltinstitut München e. V. Available at: <https://www.enkeltauglich.bio/studie>

Strict risk mitigation measures must be introduced until the substances are re-evaluated.

3. Implementation of annual, comprehensive pesticide monitoring as of 2022

The research on pesticide drift and long-range transport of pesticides via air in Germany and Europe is insufficient. A **comprehensive monitoring system** is therefore necessary, the results of which may be retrospectively incorporated into the approval process. Following points are crucial when it comes to pesticide monitoring:

- Air, soil, water and vegetation must be examined for pesticides residue
- a wide range of sites must be included in the monitoring, ranging from nature reserves to conventional and organic farms, as well as urban and rural areas.
- A publicly accessible register must be established, which shows when, where and which chemical synthetic pesticides are applied by farmers. A crop-specific and territorial evaluation of these entries must be carried out by the state within the framework of the register.

4. Introduction of a pesticide tax in 2022

The use of pesticides leads to high costs for society and for organic farmers affected by contamination. A risk-based pesticide tax serves as an internalisation of social costs and as an economic steering instrument until the final phasing out of chemical synthetic pesticides. The pesticide tax intends to promote the transformation towards organic agriculture – as a measure to achieve the European Green Deal. The revenues can be used to support farmers on their way to a more sustainable agriculture without chemical synthetic pesticides. Additionally, the tax makes it possible to compensate affected organic farmers for pesticide contamination (coexistence rights of organic farmers). **We therefore call for a pesticide tax, based on the model of the Helmholtz Association study** (2021)⁴; this includes, among other things, a tax linked to the maximum permissible application rate per hectare and year.

As a future member of the German Bundestag, we call on you to advocate for the gradual phasing out of the use of chemical synthetic pesticides, both nationally and at an EU level. The European Farm-to-Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 aim to reduce the use and risk of pesticides by 50 per cent by 2030. The implementation of our demands can make a significant contribution towards achieving this goal at both, a national and EU level.

⁴ Möckel, S., Gawel, E., Liess, M., Neumeister, L. (2021): Effect of different tax concepts for the reduction of pesticide use in Germany – a simulation analysis. Available at: https://www.gls.de/media/PDF/Presse/Studie_Pestizid-Abgabe_in_Deutschland_2021.pdf

Why us?

The initiator of the open letter – the *Bündnis für eine enkeltaugliche Landwirtschaft* – is an association of renowned organic companies, many of which are amongst the pioneers of organic farming, as well as civil society organisations that are committed to achieving an agricultural shift.

Together with drinking water associations, environmental and nature conservation organisations, other organic associations, citizens' initiatives, and scientists from the fields of medicine, ecology and agriculture, we want to help preserve the livelihoods of future generations and rebuild them where they have already been damaged.

For further information and enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,

Signatories of the Open Letter (in alphabetical order)

Bündnis für eine enkeltaugliche Landwirtschaft e.V. (Alliance for an Agriculture Suitable for Grandchildren) (Initiators)

Allos Hof-Manufaktur GmbH

Arche Naturprodukte GmbH

Aurelia Stiftung (Aurelia Foundation)

basic Aktiengesellschaft Lebensmittelhandel (food retailer)

Bingenheimer Saatgut AG

BIO COMPANY SE

BIOGARTEN Handels GmbH

Bio-Hofbäckerei Mauracher GmbH

Bioladen*Ringelblume

Biomare GmbH

BioMarkt LA VIDA GmbH

Biomarkt NB

Biomarkt Prinz Kappeln

BIO PLANÈTE Ölmühle Moog GmbH

Biovegan GmbH

Bio-Verbraucher e.V.

bio verlag GmbH

Bohlsener Mühle GmbH & Co. KG

Bürgerinitiative Landwende e. V.

Chiemgauer Naturfleisch GmbH

Deckers Biohof

Deutscher Berufs und Erwerbs Imkerbund e. V.

ebl-naturkost GmbH & Co. KG
EgeSun GmbH
EPOS Bio Partner Süd GmbH
European Professional Beekeepers Association
EVG LANDWEGE eG
fairnESSkultur
Fairy-Box UG
Fattoria La Vialla
Gemeinde Nebelschütz
Gemüsehof Rapp GbR
GLS Gemeinschaftsbank eG
Greenjobs GmbH
Grünland der Bioladen
Heinrich Heimfrisch GmbH
Herrmannsdorfer Landwerkstätten Glonn GmbH & Co. KG
Isana NaturFeinkost GmbH & Co. Produktions- und Handels KG
Klatschmohn Naturkost GmbH
Löwenzahn Naturkost
KRÄUTERSCHLÖSSL GmbH
Landkorb GmbH & Co. KG
Lebensgarten - mein Bioladen in Soest GmbH
Meta Mate UG
Minderleinsmühle GmbH & Co. KG
natur pur - Naturkost Herborn
Naturgut GmbH
Naturkost Elkershausen GmbH
Naturkostladen Sonnenblume
Neumarkter Lammsbräu Gebr. Ehrnsperger KG
Nürnberger Bio Originale
oekobonus eG
Ökoland GmbH Nord Vertriebsgesellschaft für ökologische Erzeugnisse
(Sales company for organic products)
ÖMA Beer GmbH
Peter Riegel Weinimport GmbH
purvegan GmbH
Rapunzel Naturkost GmbH
Schweisfurth Stiftung (Schweisfurth Foundation)
Senebuà
sodasan Wasch- und Reinigungsmittel GmbH
SONNENTOR Kräuterhandels GmbH
Spielberger GmbH
St. Leonhards Quelle GmbH & Co. KG
SuperBioMarkt AG

Verband Ökokiste e. V.
Verein zur Förderung einer enkeltauglichen Umwelt in Österreich
(Association for the promotion of an environment suitable for grandchildren
in Austria)
Voelkel GmbH
Wassergut Canitz GmbH

Further signatories

Aktion Agrar - Landwende jetzt e. V.
Ärztinnen und Ärzte für eine gesunde Umwelt Österreich (Doctors for a
healthy environment Austria)
anstiftung – charitable foundation under civil law
Assoziation ökologischer Lebensmittelhersteller (AÖL) e. V.
Biokreis e. V.
Bioland e. V.
Bio-Stiftung Schweiz (Bio-Foundation Switzerland)
Bundesverband Naturkost Naturwaren (BNN) e. V.
Bürgerinitiative Umweltschutz Lüchow-Dannenberg e. V.
ClimateRun
Demeter e. V.
Deutsche Umwelthilfe e. V.
Dominik Eulberg (Environmental biologist & DJ)
Dr Franz Ehrnsperger (winner of DBU Award)
Dr Hanns Moshammer (Environmental hygiene, Medical University of
Vienna)
Dr h.c. Wulf Gatter (Research station Randecker Maar e.V. Bird migration –
Insect migration)
Dr med. Ludwig Brüggmann (Internist/gastroenterology, retired chief
physician)
Dr Peter Clausing (Specialist in Toxicology [DGPT])
Dr Wilfried Knief (Biologist, Ornithologist)
European Citizens' Initiative to save bees and farmers
FINC-Foundation gGmbH
International Association of Waterworks in the Rhine Catchment Area (IAWR)
Young Association of Organic Food Producers (junge AÖL)
Kartoffelkombinat - der Verein e. V.
Climate Council Freie Waldorfschule Wahlwies
Michael Succow Stiftung (Michael Succow Foundation)
NaturFreunde Deutschlands e. V.
Naturland - Verband für ökologischen Landbau e. V.
Pestizid Aktions-Netzwerk e. V. (PAN Germany)
Professor em. Dr. Michael Succow (winner of DBU Award and winner of
Right Livelihood Award)

Qualitätsgemeinschaft Biomineralwasser e. V.
Sascha Müller-Kraenner (Expert on nature conservation, climate policy,
energy policy)
Save Our Seeds (SOS)
Foundation World Future Council
Trinkwasserschutz Oberpfälzer Jura (Drinking water protection Upper
Palatinate Jura)
Umweltinstitut München e. V.
Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) e. V.

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