



Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
10 Downing Street
Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

17 March 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

I write to you on behalf of 100,091 members of the British public who have signed The Wildlife Trusts' petition asking you to overturn the emergency authorisation of the neonicotinoid, thiamethoxam, for use on sugar beet. The emergency authorisation was designed to help tackle the potentially damaging impact of aphids on sugar beet crop. Yet neonicotinoids were banned in 2018 because of the unacceptable environmental risks they pose to pollinators, waterways and wildflowers.

While the cold weather of January and February meant aphid numbers did not meet the necessary threshold for the emergency authorisation, this does not ensure that neonicotinoids will not be applied to sugar beet in future seasons. The weather is to thank for this stay of execution, not a change in Government policy. As such, the emergency authorisation must be withdrawn, and not used in future years.

A 'pesticides-first' approach is not science-led policymaking, nor does it follow the precautionary principle. Farmers should not be forced to choose between nature or crop, pollinators or pesticides – and with the investment from Government they won't need to. With continued research into disease-resistant varieties and financial support for Integrated Pest Management (IPM), they will be enabled to move away from damaging chemical pesticides.

Our petition demonstrates the immense strength of public feeling around this issue. The public wants you to stand up for wildlife and wild spaces, and formally overturn this short-sighted derogation.

Yours sincerely,

Craig Bennett
Chief Executive, The Wildlife Trusts

The Wildlife Trusts

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