

EU hints at insecticide ban over threat to bees

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A beekeeper looks at a hive in Colomiers, southwestern France, on June 1, 2012. The European Commission hinted on Wednesday that it could ban several insecticides, some made by German chemicals giant Bayer, after scientists found disturbing evidence of harm to bees.

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The EU's food safety agency had reported "disturbing conclusions on three types of insecticides," a spokesman for EU Health Commissioner Tonio Borg said.

Following the findings, the Commission would be writing to manufacturers Bayer, Syngenta and Cruiser OSR to seek their response by January 25, the spokesman said, adding that the topic would be taken up again on January 31.

In due course, the "Commission and (EU) member states will take the necessary measures," the spokesman said, without specifying.

Earlier, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) said its scientists had "identified a number of risks posed to bees by three neonicotinoid [insecticides](#)."

"A number of recent studies have suggested that exposure to neonicotinoids at sub-lethal doses can have significant negative effects on bee health and [bee colonies](#)," it said.

Neonicotinoids attack the [central nervous system](#) of insects, causing paralysis and death, it added.

Bees and other [pollinating insects](#) are hugely important for food production, especially of fruit, and "their protection is essential," EFSA said.

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