

France bans two US pesticides, citing risk to bees

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French authorities on Wednesday banned two US pesticides which ecologists deem harmful to bees.

A court in Nice, ruling in a case brought by two ecological associations, banned the products from US group Dow AgroSciences, on the grounds that their containing sulfoxaflor was harmful to bees' nervous systems.

The court said sulfoxaflor was liable "to present a major risk of toxicity" to pollinators.

The court had already suspended the Transform and Closer brands products from sale in 2017 after they had received initial clearance from the French food and safety agency Anses.

Sulfoxaflor is designed to help protect fruit and vegetables against greenfly but some studies have suggested it can cause harm to bees—whose declining numbers are already a cause of concern in numerous countries—affecting their central nervous systems and disorientating them.

The maker of the products concerned in 2017 rated the sulfoxaflor-containing [product lines](#) as less harmful to biodiversity than a range of other pesticides which European authorities have increasingly restricted over the risk they are feared to pose to bee wellbeing as well as to aquatic life and fish.

Dow AgroSciences is now known as Corteva after Dow Chemical and DuPont merged two years ago.

The Nice court found that measures to reduce any risk to bees by for example not applying the pesticide during the blossoming season were not sufficient to permit its use, citing previous concerns highlighted by EU authorities.

The [court](#) also ruled that Dow AgroSciences and Anses should pay both the associations who brought the [legal action](#) 1,500 euros (\$1700) and

urged tighter oversight for the authorisation of products which Francois Veillerette, director of Generations Futures, one of the bodies who brought the case, said could be "disastrous for biodiversity or human health."

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