Potential impacts arising from pesticide withdrawals to Scotland's plant health

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Introduction

The Scottish agricultural, horticultural, natural environment, forestry and amenity sectors face a significant threat to their plant health and/or productivity through the loss of key plant protection active substances and products (pesticides).

This threat is due to the withdrawal of existing pesticides, limitations on the development of new pesticides, the increase in pesticide resistance in pests, weeds and diseases, and political and public pressure.

An assessment of the risk of withdrawal of the main active substances used in Scotland, and an assessment of the impact of losses of key active substances was undertaken.

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Objectives

- Assesses the risk of withdrawal of the main active substances used in Scotland across the agriculture, horticulture, natural environment, forestry and amenity sectors
- Provide an assessment of the impact of losses of key active substances in each of the above sectors

Project outcomes

- Loss of key pesticides will have a significant impact on our ability to manage pests, weeds and diseases, with total value of output affected.
- Soft fruit and field vegetable sectors will be particularly affected, and may become uneconomic.
- All sectors, where plant health management is required, will need to adapt to pesticide losses over the next five years.
- Available pesticides will need to be conserved and their use targeted within an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) framework.
- The cost of production is likely to increase as alternative approaches for managing crops are utilised.
- Engagement with relevant stakeholders should be a priority.

Key messages

- Loss of key pesticides will impact on pest, weed and disease management.
- Soft fruit and field vegetable sectors may become uneconomic.
- A shift to more expensive biological pesticides as part of an IPM approach may be required.