

Task Force on Systemic Pesticides



Chair: Dr. Maarten Bijleveld van Lexmond
Scientific coordinator: Dr. Jeroen van der Sluijs

The Chair of the Task Force on Systemic Pesticides is based in Switzerland. The Scientific coordinator is based in the Netherlands and is affiliated with the University of Utrecht.

The Task Force presently consists of 49 members of 15 nationalities and a support group.

2013 Update

- Support from the Triodos Foundation and the Act Beyond Trust, among others, has enabled the start of the Worldwide Integrated Assessment of the Impact of Systemic Pesticides on Biodiversity and Ecosystems.

- The publication of two scientific papers on the impact of systemic pesticides on macro-invertebrates in surface water as well as the impact on bees and pollinator ecosystem services.

- Act Beyond Trust will continue to support the Task Force, putting emphasis on Japan and Asia with a special interest in the effects of systemic pesticides on public health and the environment.

- The Task Force has established an official partnership with the University of Utrecht, enabling coordination and knowledge sharing in preparation of the Worldwide Integrated Assessment.

Success Stories

- Soil, water and pollen samples were taken from trees in proximity of neonicotinoid polluted water in the Netherlands to assess whether this may be a new exposure route for pollinators.

- Motion 171, adopted at the IUCN General Assembly in September 2012 gave support for a global review by the Task Force on Systemic Pesticides and was partly quoted in the Dutch parliament later that year.

Challenges

- Neonicotinoid pesticides are one of the most widely used and fastest growing class of pesticides worldwide.

- Neonics are unprecedentedly toxic to beneficial insects such as pollinators. 35 % of the world's food production depends on pollinators.

Future Goals

- The Worldwide Integrated Assessment, to be published in a high-impact journal, will be an independent and comprehensive review of scientific knowledge on this issue to date, serving as a reference document for all concerned.

- More extensive research on the knowledge gaps identified in the Worldwide Integrated Assessment, such as levels of systemic pesticides in wild plants.

- Dissemination of scientific information and identification of alternatives are to lead to authorities reassessing their policies and risk assessments worldwide.

