

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

Commissioner Dimas
DG Environment
The European Commission
200 Rue de la Loi
B1049 Brussels
Belgium

August 8th 2008

Dear Commissioner,

I am sure you are aware of the scandal surrounding aminopyralid, a persistent weedkiller that has found its way into the domestic compost market.

A number of constituents have written to me about damage to their allotments and small holdings. The Royal Horticultural Society has issued the following information:

The damage is caused by hormone-type weedkillers, approved for use on grassland to kill broad-leaved weeds. The active ingredient responsible for most of the damage is aminopyralid, though clopyralid, found in certain lawn weedkillers as well as agricultural products, can also give similar results.

The herbicide binds strongly to plant material which when grazed by or fed to cattle and horses in feedstuffs such as silage or hay, can pass through the animals without breaking down. Manure from animals fed on treated grass contains chemical residues sufficient to damage susceptible crops.

I understand that the Pesticide Safety Directorate has concluded that any produce already treated with contaminated compost is safe to eat and will not harm human health. However, whilst this is reassuring, I believe there is a further problem; namely the risk to environmental health. The RHS are suggesting that residues of aminopyralid in stacked manure may remain for anything up to two years. They advise that any contaminated land should be dug over or rotovated several times over the coming few months to encourage the break down of residues and should be suitable for replanting next spring. Any loose compost on the surface should be removed and, ideally, returned to the supplier. The RHS also stress that ruined crops should not be composted.

As I hope you will agree, this advice suggests that a number of serious risks remain. Please can you confirm, therefore, that all products containing aminopyralid have been removed from sale in the EU and that this persistent chemical will be banned in future under the EU's Pesticide Regulations.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.