

**Question for written answer E-011386/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Julie Girling (ECR)

Subject: Natural pesticides

According to media sources¹, the UK Soil Association – which advocates for organic farming in the United Kingdom – has previously recommended that growers use a ‘natural’ pesticide known as azadirachtin, which has been shown by researchers at the University of Ghent to be deadly to bumblebees. As the Commission has found, ‘Bumblebees are negatively affected by the insecticide azadirachtin even at concentrations 50 times lower than the recommended levels used by farmers².’

Now that the Commission has recognised the hazard posed by this pesticide for organic crops, is it aware that many of the ‘natural’ pesticides that are widely used in organic farming pose a serious risk to biodiversity?

How can it justify a double standard in which organic pesticides are given a separate and more lenient risk assessment than modern, conventional pesticides?

¹ <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/environment/article4472324.ece>,
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/environment/11679681/Soil-Association-approved-use-of-unauthorised-pesticide-on-organic-crops.html>

² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/bumblebee_survival_and_reproduction_impaired_by_pesticide_azadirachtin_even_at_recommended_levels_416na2_en.pdf