

**Question for written answer E-002202/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Encouraging the use of laserweeding

The American company Carbon Robotics has developed LaserWeeder, an AI-powered robot with built-in high-resolution cameras, an on-board supercomputer and sophisticated learning technology, which uses lasers to eliminate weeds.

This machine can kill up to 99 % of weeds (up to 5 000 plants per minute) and weed 0.8 hectares of land per hour.

This innovative machine could considerably reduce our need for and use of herbicides, which would in turn help to:

- safeguard the health of consumers and preserve biodiversity;
- reduce input costs for our farmers, as it would reduce their consumption not only of herbicides but also of fertilisers, since weeds absorb the nutrients in the soil, to the detriment of crops;
- deal with the fall in the number of farmers and the shortage of agricultural labour more effectively, without necessarily resorting to immigration.

Furthermore, this machine can be used to thin crops that have been deliberately over-seeded for optimum spacing, growth and yield.

1. Will the Commission provide funding for this laserweeding technique under the Common Agricultural Policy in order to achieve its objective of reducing the use of pesticides?
2. Are European firms delivering or developing equivalent technologies? Have any programmes been launched?

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