

31 July 2019

Our ref: RFI 4713



Mr John Barker

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Legal Services
Access to Information
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Exeter
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Dear Mr Barker

Access to Information Request – Request No RFI 4713

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on 02 July 2019. Your request has been carefully considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR's").

I have provided the information you have requested under each of your questions set out below for clarity. You specifically asked for:-

1. Since Natural England was established on the 01 October 2006, what is the full list of chemical products, which is has authorised through licences, for use against vegetation associated with aquatic habitats of legally protected species?

Natural England does not authorise the licencing of chemical products. Natural England does not involve a central list. We are therefore applying exception 12(4)(a) – Information Not Held - under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. This exception is applied when the public body does not hold the information requested.

2. Which, if any, of those chemical products are regarded by Natural England as safer in terms of health of (a) people and (b) other animal life?

Natural England relies on the pesticide approvals process and any associated exposure risk management in ensuring the safe use to users. Natural England would also rely this process in assessing environmental hazards and risks.

In the case of protected sites we do provide assents and consents for individual applications on the use of products for the management of invasive and non-native invasive species. In some instances we may provide advice on herbicide use for the management for aquatic habitats in relation to licencing for protected species but this advice is provided on a case by case basis.

Natural England has published a Herbicide Handbook as a guidance document on the use of herbicides for managing vegetation for nature conservation. The document was originally published in 2003. Please find attached.

The Herbicide handbook provides information that assists in determining environmental risks when using herbicides for nature conservation management.

The Herbicide Handbook is currently being revised and we would be happy to share this when published which we anticipate to be in late 2019.

3. Which, if any, of those chemical products are no longer authorised for use by Natural England?

Natural England does not authorise products for use. Chemicals Regulation Directorate can provide information on which of the herbicides covered in the handbook are no longer authorised for use.

4. What information summaries does Natural England hold, which prove that each and every chemical product currently authorised through the licensing system, does not by any means, harmfully work its way into the food chain, e.g. so the aquatic and terrestrial food sources of great crested newts are not contaminated?

Natural England does not hold chemical product summaries that specify risks of routes of entry of pesticides into ecological food chains. Therefore, we are applying exception 12(4)(a) – Information Not held under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. This exception is applied when the public body does not hold the information requested.

5. What information summaries does Natural England hold about these chemical products in (4) above, which prove that the health of (a) people and (b) wildlife are not harmed in any countries, by the manufacturing processes of those chemicals and chemicals product?

This is beyond the remit of Natural England as Natural England does not authorise products for use nor does it authorise or licence manufacturing processes. It would be the responsibility of the manufacturer to meet the legal requirement within the country of operation.

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If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. As you may be aware, under the legislation should you have any concerns with the service you have received in relation to your requests and wish to make complaint or request a review of our decision, please contact me and I'll arrange for a colleague to conduct an internal review.

Under Regulation 11(2) this needs to be done no later than 40 working days after the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of that complaint or the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the internal review procedure provided by Natural England.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Telephone: 0303 123 1113 (local rate), www.ico.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Kate Donovan, Adviser
Access to Information
Legal & Governance Team