

## 8 key tips to protect you and your business against illegal pesticides

Farmers and growers are strongly advised to take the following simple precautions to minimise the risks of buying and using illegal pesticides and demonstrate due diligence:

1. Buy only known and reputable products from known and reputable suppliers (including if buying through the internet).
2. Check the accreditation (eg BASIS) of advisers recommending and/or supplying crop protection products.
3. Always question unrealistic prices – if in doubt ask your supplier where the product came from.
4. Check that the product detailed on the invoice and delivery note matches the product ordered and delivered.
5. Check that packaging is professional, tamper-proof and securely sealed and it has a full label written in English.
6. If you are familiar with the product, ensure the colour and appearance are as expected. A parallel import should look the same as the UK reference product.
7. If you are told that the product “is the same as X’s” and is a parallel import, ask for confirmation that it was made by company X and ask which country it came from (you could ask what the original product was called). Remember that, in order to qualify for a parallel import permit, a product must be:
  - a. authorised for sale and use in the EU country from which it is purchased and,
  - b. identical to one that is already authorised for sale and use in the UK.
8. If you are unsure about the approval status of a pesticide product, check the label for details of the producer, approval holder and official authorisation. Look for it on the CRD database at : <https://secure.pesticides.gov.uk/pestreg/ProdSearch.asp> and check the Notice(s) for full details of the product. You could also contact the manufacturer or your adviser for help.

**ALWAYS REPORT SUSPICIOUS PRODUCTS AND SUPPLIERS**

(use the Defra helpline - contact details overleaf)

## Regulatory context

All pesticides used in the United Kingdom must be authorised by the Chemicals Regulation Directorate (CRD) of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

EU legislation harmonises the registration of plant protection products across member states and ensures that they are safe to use.

Once an active substance is on the EU approved list, pesticide products containing that substance can be approved by member states for sale and use in that country.

It is illegal to market or use a product introduced from another EU member state unless CRD has granted a Parallel Trade Permit confirming that it is identical to (including made by the same company) as a product already authorised in the UK.



### Contacts for further information:

Chemicals Regulation Directorate  
[www.pesticides.gov.uk](http://www.pesticides.gov.uk)

Voluntary Initiative  
[www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/watchout](http://www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/watchout)

**Defra helpline : 08459 33 55 77**

(calls charged at local rate)



**Watch Out!** for illegal pesticides

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# DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE BUYING?



**Watch Out!**

for illegal pesticides

## What are illegal pesticides?

- Trade in illegal pesticides, involving organised criminal gangs, is increasing around the world.
- Often originating in Asia, there is a trend towards importing active ingredients or formulations into the European Union (EU) in order to produce unauthorised packaged pesticide products intended for illegal sales. In addition, illegal pesticide products, ready for sale, are directly imported into the EU.
- Illegal pesticides are being passed off as legitimate pesticide products, for example as counterfeits/fakes or through misuse of parallel trade permits. This is a dangerous and illicit trade which is damaging to the credibility of the legitimate free movement of authorised products (parallel trade – see back page) within the EU.
- Illegal pesticides are untested and unapproved for sale in the EU so they have not complied with the strict safety and quality standards required for product authorisation in Europe.
- Genuine crop protection products require many years of investment in research, development and testing to prove safety to human health and the environment. This is not the case for illegal pesticides.
- Illegal products are unregulated and uncontrolled, so there is no way of knowing what substances they contain. This may pose genuine risks to human health, food and environmental safety, and farmers' livelihoods.

### Key facts

- An estimated 7-10% of pesticides on the EU market are illegal.
- Europol estimates that the global market for counterfeit and illegal pesticides is about €4.4bn a year.

## The dangers of illegal pesticides



Since illegal pesticides are untested and uncontrolled, they may contain inferior or even dangerous and banned substances.

Farmers are warned that buying and using illegal pesticides could:

- Endanger the health of sprayer operators
- Result in crop failure, rejection or destruction
- Create environmental risks to wildlife, soil and water
- Leave unknown residues in the soil to contaminate following crops
- Leave unknown residues in food products, leading to food safety or product recall issues beyond the farm-gate
- Run the risk of prosecution and criminal proceedings
- Jeopardise SPS entitlements and farm assured status

The distribution of illegal pesticide products threatens our agricultural competitiveness and the safety of the food supply within Europe. It also abuses and undermines the EU/UK regulatory controls for pesticides.

## Is it worth the risk?

Illegal pesticides may be offered for sale at a significant discount to the genuine product. If a deal sounds too good to be true, that's probably because it is.

### Consider the following example:

A grower producing potatoes for crisping is offered a supply of desiccant – used to facilitate harvesting and weed control – at a 25% discount to a market rate of £40 per litre.

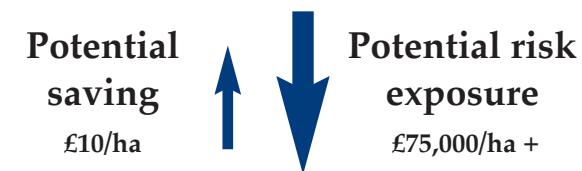
At an application rate of one litre per hectare, that's a saving to the farmer of £10 per hectare.

Now assume each hectare yields 40 tonnes of potatoes, which in turn produces 10 tonnes of potato crisps, packed into 50,000 bags of 200g, each priced at £1.50. Thus the retail sales value per hectare is about £75,000.



But what if the desiccant was of dubious origin and the potato crisps are later found to be contaminated with illegal substances?

This would lead to 50,000 bags of crisps being recalled and disposed of – goods with a retail value of £75,000. Batch contamination of a whole store could result in even greater losses.



The cost of the product recall comes on top of this, along with potential claims for reputational damage and consequential losses. The farmer may face the liability alone, as the producer of the illegal pesticide is unknown and the supplier may disclaim responsibility.

## Is it worth taking the risk to save £10 per hectare?