

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Austrian Parliament Adopts Partial Ban on Glyphosate

Country: Austria

Post: Vienna

Report Category: Agricultural Situation, Agriculture in the Economy, National Plan, Policy and Program Announcements, Agriculture in the News, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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Report Highlights:

After two unsuccessful attempts within the past two years to totally ban glyphosate, the Austrian parliament voted unanimously on a partial ban of glyphosate. This amendment of the Austrian pesticide law bans the use of glyphosate on so-called “sensitive” areas and for private use. Professional use of glyphosate including most applications in agriculture remains allowed. Unlike its earlier efforts to fully ban the substance, Austria does not anticipate any objections from the EU Commission to this partial ban.

Austrian Parliament Adopts Partial Ban on Glyphosate on “Sensitive Areas” and for Private Use

After two unsuccessful attempts within the past two years to totally ban glyphosate, the Austrian parliament voted unanimously on a partial ban of glyphosate on May 20, 2021. This amendment of the Austrian pesticide law bans the use of glyphosate on “sensitive” areas, which include publicly accessible areas like playgrounds, and parks, and areas designated for vulnerable groups of people like health institutes and retirement communities. In addition to the restricted areas, the law prohibits the use in home and community gardens and the private/non-professional use. The ban adopted a couple of years ago for pre-harvest treatment including desiccation for food and feed use remains in place. However, professional use of glyphosate including the application in agriculture continues to be allowed.

All Parties of the Austrian Parliament Voted Unanimously for the Partial Glyphosate Ban

The motion to partially ban the use of glyphosate was introduced by the two government parties, the Austrian Peoples’ Party (ÖVP) and its junior partner, the Greens. After discussion and a vote for the partial ban in the Agriculture Committee, all parties of the Austrian Parliament voted unanimously for the amendment of the Austrian pesticide law. The Social Democrats (SPÖ) however still demanded a full ban of glyphosate which Austria already unsuccessfully tried to introduce earlier. The motion of the SPÖ to fully ban the substance did not receive the necessary majority of the votes. The ÖVP and the Greens stressed on the upcoming re-assessment of glyphosate on the EU-level. The current EU-approval expires on December 15, 2022. The use of glyphosate has been a polarizing issue in Austria with many interest groups and opposition parties such as the SPÖ and the right-populist Freedom Party (FPÖ) favoring a complete ban. The governing ÖVP has always been against a total glyphosate ban to not offend its farmer voters. The coalition junior partner, the Greens – in accordance with their green agenda - also would favor a total ban but currently do not push for it to not counteract their government partner.

Austrian Farmers Relieved About the Partial Ban

Austrian farmers are relieved that they still can use glyphosate as a highly effective herbicide in agriculture. In case of a total ban, farmer representatives expressed concerns about losing competitiveness on the agricultural market. Josef Moosbrugger, President of the Chamber of Agriculture Austria, stated, "This partial ban, in accordance with EU law, eliminates the risk of particularly sensitive applications, for example on publicly accessible areas. At the same time, it ensures that agriculture continues to have a suitable instrument at hand. That approach takes into account the security needs of the population as well as the necessities for soil-conserving agriculture.”

Austria does not Expect Objections from the EU Commission

Austria took the detailed opinion of the EU Commission opposing its earlier draft law to totally ban glyphosate into account. Austria now adopted a law which is expected to be within EU law where member states are allowed to restrict or ban the use of pesticides on specific areas. For this reason, Austria does not anticipate any objections from the EU Commission to this law.

For further reports on the Austrian glyphosate ban please search the FAS/USDA Gain database:
<https://gain.fas.usda.gov/>

Attachments:

No Attachments.