

Examples of Uses of the PSU pesticide usage dataset

The main purpose of the pesticide usage dataset is to inform the UK Government and their Advisory Committee for Pesticides (ACP) about the post-approval use of pesticides to provide feedback to the pesticide approval process. This feeds into the compounds monitored in other post-approval schemes such as pesticide residues in food (PRIF) and the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS). The Scottish Government is also a primary user of these data to inform and support agricultural decision making and they frequently refer to the dataset to inform policy and provide responses to Parliamentary and Ministerial questions.

In addition to this primary function the following case studies are examples of different ways the pesticide usage dataset has been used:

1) Informing stakeholders in relation to the neonicotinoids debate

The uses of three neonicotinoid insecticidal compounds (imidacloprid, thiamethoxam and clothianidin) were restricted by the EU during 2013. Both before and after the restrictions were imposed there was considerable interest in use patterns of these compounds. Data were provided to various stakeholders on both sides of the debate about these compounds; including Scottish Government policy staff and members of parliament, university researchers, wildlife trusts, journalists and members of the public.

2) Complementing agricultural research

Regional fungicide use data has been supplied to SRUC to allow comparative analysis of pesticide use and fungicide resistance data as part of SRUC's Scottish Government funded pathology research work package.

In addition, SASA are collaborating with the James Hutton Institute to use the dataset to assess the environmental impact of pesticide use using the Environmental Index Quotient (EIQ) method

3) Informing environmental quality bodies

Total estimated quantities of pesticide active ingredients used were supplied for use in SEPA's chemical analysis prioritisation project. This project informed decisions on priority chemicals for analysis in relation to the water framework directive.

In addition, detailed regional datasets are provided annually to Scottish Water to inform their decision making.

4) Providing data university research projects

Recently a detailed 20 year dataset was provided to Newcastle University for an epidemiology study looking at correlations between pesticide use and childhood cancers. Similar datasets have been provided to Aberdeen University in the past

to be used in research about the correlation between pesticide use and Parkinsons disease.

5) Use in Education

Data and advice is regularly provided to university students with projects involving pesticide use and more recently we have provided data to schools as part of the new National 5s curriculum.

Potential Uses of the PSU dataset

Whilst the main purpose of collection of pesticide usage information is to inform the UK and Scottish Governments about the post-approval use of pesticides, the dataset may also be used by a wide range of stakeholders for a variety of purposes.

Data may be used by agricultural research and advisory bodies to inform and complement research projects. They may also be used by environmental quality bodies to direct and prioritise their monitoring strategies.

The pesticide industry may consult the data to complement their own sales data and to gain an insight into the use patterns of their own and competitor's products.

The dataset may also be consulted by environmental and wildlife groups and interested or concerned members of the public. It may also be of educational value for teaching and student research projects.

The pesticide usage reports and public access database are presented in a clear and concise manner to attempt to allow accessibility to a range of data users.