

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003073/24
to the Commission
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(20 December 2024)**

Subject: Impact of the proposed limit on total chromium in ABP fertilisers — risks to the circular economy and the EU agricultural sector

Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 lays down the rules for making fertilisers available in the EU, but it has still not been fully implemented. Many raw materials remain usable at national level only. Through its DG GROW expert group on Fertilising Products, the Commission has contracted Qlab (Research, Analytical and Quality Control Lab, Greece) to conduct a study on animal by-products (ABPs). The study proposes a limit on total chromium for some ABP-based matrices.

This proposal seems to ignore the scientific literature already assessed by the Commission during the drafting of the regulation, which did not provide any justification for a limit on total chromium. The introduction of such a restriction could undermine access to raw materials and hinder free trade in the single market. Moreover, this would prevent the recovery of ABPs, reducing the availability of essential tools for farmers and violating the circular economy principles on which the regulation is based.

In view of the above:

1. Why has the Commission not yet taken a definitive position on the restrictions on total chromium in ABP fertilisers, despite a lack of scientific evidence of risks?
2. What steps will it take to avoid damage to the fertiliser industry and farmers, especially in Italy, where ABPs are a strategic resource?
3. How will it ensure compliance with circular economy principles during the implementation of the regulation?

Submitted: 20.12.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(21 March 2025)**

1. The Commission has not yet taken a decision on the safety criteria needed for EU fertilising products containing materials derived from animal by products (ABPs) because the scientific assessment to determine the necessary safety criteria is not yet finalised, including for possible limits on chromium content. The assessment covers multiple types of materials, and many consultations have been carried out to collect the latest scientific evidence available.
2. The way fertilising products are regulated allows manufacturers to choose between national rules or EU rules for marketing their products. The inclusion of new materials derived from ABPs in the Fertilising Products Regulation ⁽¹⁾ (FPR) will not change national rules but will create new opportunities for the industry to trade their products more easily across the EU and increase the offer for farmers.
3. The Commission is fully committed to implement the circular economy in the field of fertilising products. However, in accordance with its empowerment, the Commission may only include new materials in the FPR for which there is scientific evidence that they do not present a risk to human, animal or plant health, to safety or to the environment. Therefore, the Commission will take into account the circular economy principles but also the risks associated with the use of these materials in its decision making.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 laying down rules on the making available on the market of EU fertilising products and amending Regulations (EC) No 1069/2009 and (EC) No 1107/2009 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003, OJ L 170, 25.6.2019, p. 1-114, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1009/oj>