What is happening at E.U. level regarding weed control in sugar beet?

Alex Krick, Deputy
CIBE (International Confederation of European Beet Growers)

UNITING BEET GROWERS
CIBE
since 1927

BBRO Weeds Seminar, 17 February 2026

The toolbox: HB AS/AI “lost” since 2020

AS/AI	Code*	First approval	Regulatory Fate
Chloridazon	5 or C1,2	01/01/2009	Approval expired 31/12/2018, MGP expired 30/06/2020
Desmedipham	5 or C1,2	01/03/2005	Non-renewal 01/07/2019, WoA 01/01/2020, MGP expired 01/07/2020
Diquat (CfS)	22 or D	01/01/2002	Non-renewal 14/11/2018, WoA 04/05/2019, MGP expired 04/02/2020
Haloxyfop-P (CfS)	1 or A	01/01/2011	Approval expired 31/12/2020, MGP expired 30/06/2021
S-metolachlor	15 or K3	01/04/2005	Non-renewal 22/01/2024, WoA 23/04/2024, MGP expired 23/07/2024
Triflusulfuron(-methyl)	2 or B	01/09/2009	Non-renewal 20/11/2023, WoA 20/02/2024, MGP expired 20/08/2024

*HRAC/WSSA or Legacy HRAC // MGP = maximum period of grace // CfS = Candidate for Substitution

‘Stillborn’ AS/AI: Chlorpropham (23 or K2): first approved at EU-level in 2002, non-renewal in 2019, while authorization of PPPs for use on sugar beet was pending in at least 1 EU MS

‘’Abandoned’ AS/AI: Triallate (15 or K3.N): CfS, current approval expires 31/03/2027

HB AS/AI got off relatively “lightly” compared to FU (12) & IN (15)

1 EA granted for Safari since the loss of triflusulfuron

Granted by Hungary from 01/03/2025 to 28/06/2025 for 15 000 ha.

It is not clear whether an EA will be granted for the 2026 beet crop (last year's was notified in late February).

Overall, the first crop year without PPPs containing triflusulfuron does not appear to have been too difficult with regards to effective weed control in sugar beet.

There are still some tools left – but for how long?

HB AS/AI coming up for renewal (or not) by 31/12/2029

AS/AI	Code	First approval	Expiry of approval	Renewal dossier submitted
Clethodim	1 or A	01/06/2011	31/08/2026 (extended twice)	31/08/2020
Clomazone	13 or F4	01/11/2008	30/09/2026 (extended 7 times)	30/10/2015
Cycloxydim	1 or A	01/06/2011	31/08/2026 (extended twice)	31/08/2020
Florpyrauxifen-benzyl	4 or O	24/07/2019	24/07/2029 (first approval)	24/07/2026 (deadline)
Fluazifop-p (butyl)	1 or A	01/01/2012	31/05/2026 (extended twice)	31/03/2021
Metamitron	5 or C1,2	01/09/2009	30/11/2026 (extended thrice)	20/02/2020
Phenmedipham	5 or C1,2	01/03/2005	30/09/2026 (extended 9 times)	13/12/2012 (at the latest)
Propaquizafop	1 or A	01/12/2009	28/02/2027 (extended 4 times)	30/05/2019
Quinmerac	4 or O	01/05/2011	31/12/2026 (extended twice)	30/07/2021
Quizalofop-P-ethyl	1 or A	01/12/2009	28/02/2027 (extended 4 times)	30/05/2019
Quizalofop-P-tefuryl (former CfS)	1 or A	01/12/2009	28/02/2027 (extended 4 times)	30/05/2017
Thiencarbazone-methyl*	2 or B	01/07/2014	01/03/2027 (extended twice)	30/09/2021

*AS/AI in CONVISO ONE

The PMP saga: successive extensions of approval period

PMP was formally included in Council Directive 91/414/EEC for a period of 10 years (01/03/2005 to 28/02/2015)

In June 2012, Regulation 1107/2009 entered into force, effectively replacing 91/414/EEC
By 13/12/2012, the application for the renewal of approval of PMP had been submitted.

So far, the approval period for PMP has had to be “administratively” extended 9 times, as its approval “would be likely to expire” before a decision would be taken on its renewal:
Thus, PMP’s approval period was extended to
31/07/2017 in December 2012,
31/07/2018 in May 2017,
31/07/2019 In June 2018,
31/07/2020 in May 2019,
31/07/2021 in June 2020,
31/07/2022 in May 2021,
31/07/2023 in May 2022,
15/02/2025 in May 2023,
30/09/2026 in January 2025!

PMP has thus spent over 10 years (so far) in the process of renewal of approval!

“Safe” HB AS/AI (2030 & beyond)

AS/AI	Code	First approval	Renewal dossier submitted	Renewal(s) of approval	Expiry of approval
2,4-D	4 or O	01/10/2002	30/04/2014	01/01/2016	31/12/2030
Clopyralid	4 or O	01/05/2007	30/04/2014	01/10/2021	30/09/2036
Dimethenamid-P	15 or K3	01/01/2004	29/10/2013	01/09/2019	31/08/2034
Ethofumesate	15 or K3	01/03/2003	28/07/2013	01/11/2016	31/10/2031
Foramsulfuron*	2 or B	01/04/2003	26/07/2013	01/06/2021	31/05/2035
Glyphosate	9 or G	01/07/2002	Before 15/07/2011	16/12/2017 (5 y) & 16/12/2023 (10 y)	15/12/2033
Lenacil (former CfS)	5 or C1,2	01/01/2009	21/12/2015	01/07/2025	30/06/2040

*AS/AI in CONVISO ONE

In general, procedures for renewal of approval are quite lengthy (> 5 years)

Chemical HB AS/AI pending EU approval

AS/AI & HRAC	*Status of application for approval*
Benzobicyclon (27 or F2)	Dossier admissible since 21/5/2020, peer review published 28/10/2025, critical areas of concern (CAoC) identified
Bixlozone (13 or F4)	Approval voted in January 2026 SCoPAFF (favourable opinion), CIR not published yet
Cinmethylin (30 or Q)	Dossier admissible since 30/10/2018, publication of output imminent
Fenquinotrione (27 or F2)	Intake/Dossier admissible since 21/06/2021
Icafolin-methyl (23)	Intake/Dossier admissible since 13/11/2025
Napropamide-M (Z)	Clock Stop from 13/12/2017 to 25/05/2018, output published 12/11/2018, CAoC identified
Pyrithiobac-Na (2 or B)	Intake/Dossier admissible since 15/9/2022

Bixlozone?

Proposed approval voted in SCoPAFF on 26/01/2026, with 25 Member States representing a population of 96.34% in favour.

First new herbicide AS/AI to be approved in EU since florpyrauxifen-benzyl was approved in 2019.

“Already commercialized in Argentina, Brazil, Australia, China, and India, Isoflex™ active has shown exceptional pre- and early post-emergence selectivity across crops like cereals, legumes, and oilseeds. The UK rollout is set for 2025, with EU-wide availability anticipated by 2027, based on final regulatory timelines.”
Source: 30 Million Hectares at Stake as FMC and Bayer Launch Isoflex Active in EU and UK

IBCA (invertebrate biological control agents)

Common weed name	Latin name	Exotic IBCAs
Butterfly bush	*Buddleja davidii*	*Cleopus japonicus, Mecyslobus erro*
Japanese knotweed	*Fallopia japonica*	*Lixus* sp., *Aphalara* sp.
Silver wattle	*Acacia dealbata*	*Trichilogaster acaciaelongifoliae*
Tree of heaven	*Ailanthus altissima*	*Eucryptorrhynchus brandti, Cryptorhynchus chinensis, Orthopagus lunulifer*
Water fern	*Azolla filiculoides*	*Stenopelmus rufinasus, Pseudolampsis guttata*
Black locust	*Robinia pseudoacacia*	*Phyllonorycter robiniella, Obolodiplosis robiniae, Megacyllene robiniae*
Common ragweed	*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*	*Zygogramma suturalis, Epiblema strenuana*
Silverleaf nightshade	*Solanum elaeagnifolium*	*Leptinotarsa texana, Leptinotarsa defecta, Orrina phyllobia*
Groundsel-bush	*Baccharis halimifolia*	*Hellinsia balanotes, Megacyllene mellyi, Rhopalomyia californica, Trirhabda bacharidis*
Floating pennywort	*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*	*Listronotus elongatus*
Water primrose	*Ludwigia grandiflora*	*Lysathia ludoviciana*
Parrot's feather	*Myriophyllum aquaticum*	*Lysathia* sp., *Listronotus marginicollis*
Canadian goldenrod	*Solidago canadensis*	*Eurosta solidaginis, Gnorimoschema gallaesolidaginis, Phaneta formosana Epiblema scudderiana*

The 13 environmental weed species proposed by Sheppard et al. as being suitable for classical biological control using exotic IBCA do not appear to be sufficiently significant in sugar beet growing to warrant research into their control using IBCA.

Regulatory dead-end?

Information from CroplifeEurope, communicated on 14/01/2026:

Europe's farmers are being asked to deliver more: on sustainability, climate resilience and food security. Meanwhile the crop protection toolbox available to them continues to shrink.

Since May 2019 (6.5 years), EU growers have lost a net **89 crop protection solutions** (conventional pesticides and biopesticides). This includes a net loss of 84 conventional active substances and a net loss of 5 biological. Over the same period, not a single new conventional pesticide has been approved.

At the same time, innovation is not reaching the field fast enough. What makes this situation especially frustrating is that innovation in agriculture worldwide is progressing at remarkable speed. Europe has the scientific expertise to lead globally in sustainable agriculture, yet much of this potential remains locked in a slow and fragmented regulatory system.

Food and feed safety - Simplification Omnibus

16/09/2025: Commission launched a call for evidence for the initiative “Food and feed safety – simplification omnibus”, with the aim to:

- increase the competitiveness of EU farmers and the food and feed industry,
- reduce the administrative burden on Member States authorities related to marketing authorisations of products,
- accelerate access to the EU market for biocontrol substances and products,
- simplify and clarify regulatory requirements on plant protection products, biocidal products, feed additives, food hygiene and official controls as well as other measures to simplify EU food law.

CIBE provided feedback to this call, underlining the shrinking of the crop protection toolbox for beet growers.

16/12/2025: Commission adopted its “Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009, Regulation (EC) No 396/2005, Regulation (EU) No 528/2012, Regulation (EC) 1829/2003, Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003, Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, Regulation 1099/2009, Regulation (EC) No 999/2001, Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009, Regulation (EU) 2017/625, Directive 98/58/EC and Directive 2009/128/EC as regards simplifying and strengthening food and feed safety requirements”.

Feedback to this proposal is open until 07/04/2026. All feedback received will be summarised by the Commission and presented to the European Parliament and Council with the aim of **feeding into the legislative debate**.

Food and feed safety - Simplification Omnibus

The proposed amendments to Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 include **positive elements**, such as :

1- Making **approvals of AS/AI unlimited in duration** (with numerous exceptions).

2-Removing from Article 4(7) the obligation on MS authorising PPPs containing AS/AI approved under that article **to draw up a phasing-out plan for such PPPs**.

3-Doubling the maximum overall length of grace periods (for PPPs containing AS/AI for which approval was not renewed or withdrawn) from 18 to 36 months.

Food and feed safety - Simplification Omnibus

The proposed amendments to Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 include **elements reserved for biocontrol substances**, such as:

1- Obliging the rapporteur Member State (rMS) to **give priority** to the assessment of applications for approval of **biocontrol substances**.

2- Giving Member States the possibility to grant "**provisional authorisation prior to first approval**" for PPPs **containing only biocontrol substances**.

3-Considering the Union as **one zone** for applications for the authorisation of PPPs **containing only biocontrol substances** or low-risk active substances and allowing for tacit **mutual recognition** of authorisations for such PPPs.

Emerging weed control challenge: *Conviso Smart*

Resistance issues identified in at least four countries

- In Sweden, a number of Conviso Smart fields were found to have low efficacy and most likely ALS-herbicide resistance (mostly *Chenopodium*, *Stellaria*, *Sonchus* and *Persicaria*).

- In Germany, weed species with resistance to Conviso ONE in sugar beet:

Common tumbleweed (*Amaranthus retroflexus*)
Black-grass (*Alopecurus myosuroides*)
Fat-hen/goosefoot (*Chenpodium album*)
Camomile/scented mayweed (*Matricaria chamomilla*)
Cockspur (*Echinochloa crus-galli*)

Currently approved SMART varieties have low tolerance to SBR and respond with large yield losses.

New weed control challenge: *Cyperus esculentus*

Aka: chufa, tiger nut, atadwe, yellow nutsedge, earth almond

In some cases, sugar beet factories no longer accept beet from infested areas.

If the weed is known to be present in the field (or in part of the field), sugar beet should <u>not</u> be grown.

Sources (in German)
https://www.landwirtschaftskammer.de/landwirtschaft/pflanzenschutz/ackerbau/erdmandelgras.htm
https://www.landwirtschaftskammer.de/landwirtschaft/pflanzenschutz/ackerbau/pdf/beitrag-erdmandelgras.pdf

Example of ongoing work: biannual weed control event in France

9th edition of Desherb'Avenir, 21 & 22 May 2025

Update on the latest solutions for reducing the use of herbicides in large-scale crops.

Commented parade of machines, offering a first impression of the equipment and innovations, followed by visits to:

Weed science workshop: help farmers identify weeds from the cotyledon stage and observe their root system. A better knowledge of these plants allows to effectively adjust weeding strategies.

Demonstrations of mechanical weeding tools: Each manufacturer presented, under real conditions, mechanical weeding tools, including cultivators, rotary hoes and spring harrows. Opportunity to discover and compare the guidance systems, designed to improve the precision of interventions.

Simulation of precision spraying tools: exhibition of the latest innovations in targeted and localized spraying. These technologies are an effective complement to mechanical weeding, allowing a significant reduction in the use of PPPs.

Focus on weeding robots: Weeding robots were highlighted during dynamic demonstrations. These innovative autonomous solutions enable effective weeding in the row and open up new perspectives for more precise and sustainable weed management. CP_post_DA9.pdf

10th edition of Desherb'Avenir in May 2027 in Nord-Pas-de- Calais

Conclusions

- 7 currently approved HB AS/AI likely to remain available in the medium term.
- 12 currently approved HB AS/AI are coming up for renewal in the next 3-4 years.
- The future of key AS/AI phenmedipham may be decided this year.
- 7 HB AS/AI currently in the EU approval pipeline; not clear how many (if any) of these will end up being crop protection tools available to beet growers.
- Intense R&D work by beet research institutes continues, but weed control is – alas – not the only serious crop protection issue…
- Bottom line: without satisfactory weed control, there will be considerably less crop to be protected against pests and diseases.
- Ongoing legislative process on simplification of EU regulation on PPPs: “too little, too late?”

Weeds can cause >90% yield reduction in infested fields.

Thank you for your attention!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.cibe-europe.eu

FOLLOW US

@SugarBeetEurope

FOLLOW US

CIBE - Sugar Beet Europe

UNITING BEET GROWERS since CIBE 1927

EU BEET SUGAR SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP EU BSSP

INNOVATION SUSTAINABILITY AGRICULTURE & PROGRESS

BIO-BASED INDUSTRIES Public-Private Partnership