

Unsolved Problems in the Assessment and Management of Environmental Risks of Pesticides – Research Tasks not only for the Natural Sciences

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Abstract

EU law defines pesticides as the entirety of biocides and plant protection products. Both groups of substances must undergo a complex environmental risk assessment in authorisation procedures in order to be marketed and used. Despite these requirements, according to current knowledge plant protection products in particular have a serious impact on biodiversity in agricultural ecosystems and also pollute groundwater. The search for causes leads to interesting research questions. These are only partly in the field of natural sciences. Rather, the bottleneck for the necessary reform of environmental risk assessment and environmental risk management are often political and economic problems that are, however, cloaked in scientific terms. Against this backdrop, the presentation shows starting points for the possible further development of the scientific work of the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research.