



# EU Aims to Reduce Pesticides

Discussion > Advanced 9



## Exercise 1 – Vocabulary

<b>pesticide</b>	A substance used to kill insects or animals that damage crops.
[noun]	<i>Ex: <b>Pesticides</b> can be toxic to humans.</i>

<b>pollinate</b>	To take pollen from one plant to another so that it produces seeds.
[verb]	<i>Ex: A lot of plants rely on butterflies to <b>pollinate</b> them.</i>

<b>bloc</b>	A group of countries that work closely together.
[noun]	<i>Ex: You need a visa if you want to travel around the European <b>bloc</b>.</i>



<b>induce</b>	To cause something.
[verb]	<i>Ex: The scandal <b>induced</b> a change of policy.</i>

<b>lash out</b>	To speak or criticize someone or something in an angry way.
[phrasal verb]	<i>Ex: The president <b>lashed out</b> at the media during the press conference.</i>

<b>bear the brunt</b>	To suffer the worst part of an unpleasant or bad situation.
[phrase]	<i>Ex: The infantry division <b>bore the brunt</b> of the attack.</i>



## Exercise 2 – Reading

*Read the text aloud with your tutor and discuss the key points.*

### EU Aims to Reduce Pesticides

The European Commission has unveiled plans to protect biodiversity across the European Union while building a more sustainable food system, insisting on the need to both reduce the use of pesticides and promote organic farming.

In line with its ambition of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to zero by mid-century, the European Commission wants to halve the use of chemical pesticides by 2030 and to ensure that at least 25% of agricultural land is reserved for organic farming, compared to 8% at the moment. The commission also wants to plant at least 3 billion extra trees over the next 10 years.

"Nature is vital for our physical and mental wellbeing: it filters our air and water, it regulates the climate and it pollinates our crops," said Stella Kyriakides, the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety. "But we are acting as if it didn't matter, and losing it at an unprecedented rate."



Frans Timmermans, the commission vice-president in charge of the so-called Green Deal, said the new plans will help the 27-nation bloc recover from the economic crisis induced by the coronavirus pandemic. The commission also estimates that investing in organic farming will help create 10-20% more jobs per hectare than traditional farming.

The proposals, which still need to be endorsed by member states, got a hostile reception from European farmers' association COPA-COGECA. Environmental organization Greenpeace also complained about the absence of a clear commitment to reduce the production and consumption of meat.

"The European Commission has finally accepted the science and recognizes that producing and consuming too much meat is hurting health, destroying nature, and driving climate breakdown, but chooses to do nothing about it," said Marco Contiero, Greenpeace EU agriculture policy director, adding that the EU spent billions supporting what he called the "overproduction" of meat.

The farmers' association warned about the risks of a loss of income for farmers, lashing out at a perceived "attack on European agriculture."

"Farmers alone must not bear the brunt of the costs of further environmental and climate protection," said COPA president Joachim Rukwied.



## Exercise 3 – Discussion

*Discuss the following questions with your tutor.*

1. What are your thoughts on the EU's plans to reduce the use of pesticides and promote organic farming?
2. Do you think that protecting the environment should be every government's top priority?
3. Would you support a ban on pesticides in your country? Why? Why not?
4. How often do you buy organic produce? Why?
5. Is agriculture an important part of your country's economy?
6. What crops are traditionally grown in your country?
7. Could you see yourself living or working on a farm?
8. What do you imagine would be the hardest thing about working on a farm?