

# BREXIT: A CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

Crop protection products are vital to the success of the UK food and farming sector. Brexit presents the UK with a unique opportunity to become a global hub for crop protection research and development.



The food and farming sector is worth



The UK spends



on crop protection every year

Our members invest **£200m**



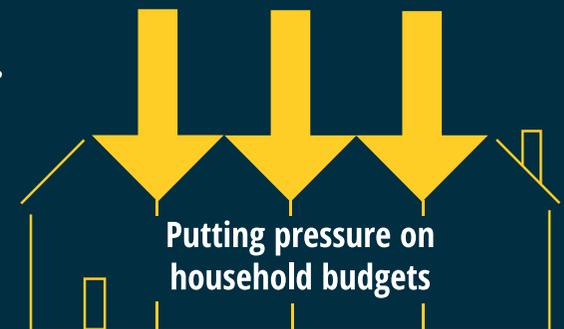
contributing to a total industry spend of

in **R&D** each year

**£4bn** globally



Without crop protection products, the nation's food bill would increase by



1990



2017



But R&D spend on products for the European market is declining

This is the UK's chance to lead the way in crop protection innovation across the globe.

## Brexit: A Challenge and Opportunity

Europe has become the museum of world agriculture. Brexit provides us with the opportunity to demonstrate progressive and enlightened leadership in promoting modern, productive and sustainable farming – establishing the right conditions to benefit from investment in agri-tech research and development, to play our part in feeding ourselves and the world.

Crop protection products are a key tool in the UK food and farming sector, a sector which is worth £108 billion to the UK economy. Without pesticides, the nation's food bill would increase by 40%, or £70 billion, putting significant pressure on household budgets.

Sales of crop protection products in the UK are around three quarters of a billion pounds annually, and our industry employs more than 4000 people. Our member companies make an equally important contribution to science and academia, investing over £200m each year in UK based research and development which helps support sustainable production across the globe.

Globally our industry spends around £4bn per year on research and development, but the share of this investment focused on products for the European market has declined from 33% in the 1990s to around 7% today. This is a direct consequence of overly precautionary regulation at the EU level, a system that places hazard rather than risk at the centre of its decisions and which creates uncertainty by allowing political considerations to circumvent the approvals process, as we have seen with the reapproval process for glyphosate.

The distinction between hazard (something with the intrinsic properties to cause harm) and risk (the actual probability of harm occurring) is a key issue for the crop protection industry. A hazard-based approach to regulation only considers the intrinsic properties of the substance, whereas a risk-based approach considers both the properties of the substance and also how it's used in the real world. Pesticides are of course hazardous, but if used properly they should pose no risk. This distinction between hazard and risk is crucial

to our use of pesticides, as indeed it is to many other potentially harmful products we encounter in our daily lives.

The Crop Protection Association (CPA) is the voice of the UK plant science industry. Our members are involved in the development and manufacture of a wide range of plant science technologies, including crop protection products such as synthetic and bio pesticides, plant breeding and agricultural biotechnology. We aim to provide innovative solutions to the challenge of safeguarding our food security, whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing the environment.

Crop protection products are a fundamental part of modern food production, especially if we are to meet the challenge of feeding a global population expected to reach 9.5 billion by 2050. The UN estimates that we need to produce 60% more food by 2050, but at the same time we need to protect our natural environment. Modern technology such as pesticides and plant breeding will be crucial in meeting national and international demands for safe food, helping us maximise the productivity of existing land, whilst leaving uncropped land as habitats for wildlife.

To provide farmers with the tools necessary to meet the challenge of feeding the world we will need to invest in research and development into agricultural technologies, in the wake of Brexit the UK has a unique opportunity to lead by example and become a significant global centre for agricultural research and development.

In establishing a political, legislative and regulatory environment settlement following the UK's exit from the European Union, the CPA will work with government to achieve:

- An approach to the regulation and approval of crop protection products that protects human health and the environment while incentivising innovation and giving farmers, growers and other users access to safe and effective products.
- An emphasis on risk rather than hazard in approving crop protection products for use, which

assesses the actual, potential harm posed by any specific substance, taking into account factors such as exposure and potency.

- A recognition of the importance of creating and supporting a commercial environment for crop protection products that ensures businesses continue to invest in their research, development and manufacture, and bring products to the UK market that benefit farmers, growers and other users.
- A lasting settlement that recognises the value of UK agriculture and the importance of domestic food production. In particular, government policy relating to agriculture should strike a balance between protecting and enhancing the environment and supporting productive agriculture in the UK, and should promote the role of technology in providing solutions that meet this aim.

Brexit has shaken the entire political landscape, but amidst the challenges there is a unique opportunity for UK farming. An opportunity to design an agricultural policy that ensures UK farming can compete with the rest of the world and ensure our farmers have the tools and support they need to bring healthy, safe, reliable and affordable food to tables across the UK.

There are also significant opportunities ahead for the agricultural technology sector in the UK, but to unlock this potential the country needs a science-based approach to policy making. Regulations should foster innovation; and incentivise research and development into new technologies in pest control and crop science, while at the same time protecting human health and the environment.

**Our exit from the EU will provide the UK with an opportunity to become a global leader in crop protection R&D. We are keen to work with government departments to help develop a regulatory environment that encourages investment in innovation.**