

CYPERMETHRIN SHEEP DIPS NOW PERMANENTLY BANNED

Salmon & Trout Association and Fish Legal hail notable victory against one of our waterways' most lethal toxic killers

The Environment Agency (EA) and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) issued a statement yesterday confirming a permanent ban of cypermethrin sheep dips.

The sale of cypermethrin sheep dip products had been temporarily banned by Defra since 21 February 2006, and the Salmon & Trout Association (S&TA), Atlantic Salmon Trust, Anglers' Conservation Association (now re-named Fish Legal), Buglife – the Invertebrate Conservation Trust, and other fisheries environmental groups, have been seeking a permanent ban ever since.

The Sheep Dip Stakeholder Steering Group involved representatives from all sides of the argument and developed an Action Plan for the Pollution Reduction Programme for sheep dip, including the "Stop-Every-Drop" message and associated industry led campaign. However, continual lobbying, backed up by the threat of legal action and freedom of information requests, from the fisheries and environmental sector has led to the only sustainable decision possible from this action.

The pressure has resulted in an unexpected development. In recent weeks, the three manufacturers of cypermethrin sheep dip products have voluntarily written to instruct the VMD to expire the Marketing Authorisations for their cypermethrin sheep dip products, which had duly been actioned. That means there are now no cypermethrin sheep dip products with a UK Marketing Authorisation. Defra Ministers have been informed of this situation.

Paul Knight, CEO of the S&TA, said, "this day has been long in coming, but marks a significant step in the improvement of UK rivers. It brings to a conclusion fifteen years of work by S&TA and other organisations to get these lethal chemicals banned from entering our waterways. Miniscule amounts of cypermethrin have proved incredibly damaging to aquatic insects, fish eggs and the fish themselves, causing widespread damage in Wales, SW and NW England and many other areas. Achieving this permanent ban proves that the concerted, coordinated lobbying and influence of fisheries organisations can bring about real benefits for the aquatic environment and its dependent species."

Mark Lloyd, CEO of Fish Legal and the Angling Trust, said: "we are delighted that the manufacturers have finally thrown in the towel and given up trying to sell these chemicals which have done so much harm to UK rivers. The recent decision by the Information Commissioner to force the manufacturers to reveal their previously-secret environmental risk assessments was very significant, not just for the fate of cypermethrin, but for other polluting chemicals. Fish Legal will fight the manufacturers' attempt to appeal this important decision."