



Hylobius alert: potential counterfeit insecticides

An insecticide product which was supplied to a UK grower for the control of hylobius is strongly suspected to be a counterfeit material.

Around 10% of all pesticides in use throughout Europe are thought to be illicit or counterfeit, and as these products have not undergone any form of safety checks, their use poses serious human health risks, environmental damage by polluting water courses with potentially very toxic chemicals, as well as transgressing forest certification rules.

In order to alert growers to this threat, Scottish police have been visiting farms and distributors as part of a European-wide initiative co-ordinated by Europol against the trade, often run by serious and organised criminal gangs, in which it estimates the global market for counterfeit and illegal pesticides is €4.4bn.

The suspected UK case involved a parallel import of the insecticide acetamiprid. Acetamiprid is sold in the UK as a soluble granule formulation, Gazelle SG.

Under EC trade laws, importers may bring the product into the UK under their own name providing the product is identical to that approved for sale in the UK.

There are currently five such acetamiprid products in the UK sold respectively as Aceta 20SG, Acetamex 20SP, Persist, Sangué and Vulcan. Some of these are identical

to Gazelle SG and may legally be used for hylobius control, as the offlabel approval on Gazelle SG is automatically transferred to them. However, some are own label versions of a soluble powder formulation sold as Insyst and these may not be used for hylobius control.

So, if you are offered a 'cheap' version of Gazelle SG, or any other pesticide product, be very wary indeed. It may be perfectly legal and acceptable - but there may be more sinister reasons for the low cost, as found to their cost by Polish farmers who have lost farmland worth €3m following the use of illicit material.

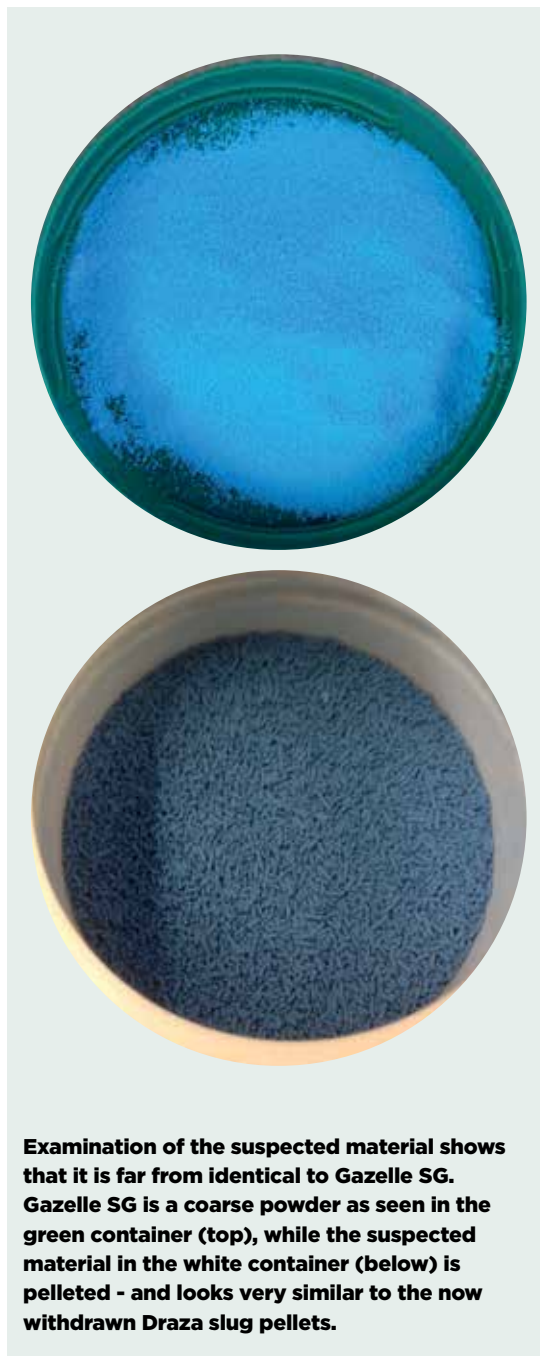
See also: An integrated pest management strategy for Hylobius, p45



MEMBER SERVICES

Pesticides helpline

If you haven't used the service to date, be assured it is a free service operated by Confor's crop protection adviser Colin Palmer on behalf of Confor members. Colin can be contacted 8am to 8pm Mondays to Fridays on 01531 633500 (leave a message if necessary) or by email to: forestry@branchline.demon.co.uk



Examination of the suspected material shows that it is far from identical to Gazelle SG. Gazelle SG is a coarse powder as seen in the green container (top), while the suspected material in the white container (below) is pelleted - and looks very similar to the now withdrawn Draza slug pellets.

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