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THE PRIME MINISTER

10 December 2008

Dear Mr Dyer

Thank you and your co-signatories for your letter of 26 September about the EC Pesticides Authorisation Regulation.

Hilary Benn and I agree with the points you make. We are not, of course, understating the genuine need to regulate pesticides but in this case the approach taken goes well beyond the risk based approach to regulation that is advised by the UK's scientific establishment.

At a time when we face risks of food scarcity in parts of the world, and where food price inflation is in double figures, it simply does not make sense to adopt a measure which could reduce yields of key crops by 20-30 per cent and for which there is not even a half-robust impact assessment.

We are of course in a negotiation and we have to recognise that other Member States prefer the approach taken in the regulation, based on hazard rather than risk. We know too that the European Parliament is seeking amendments to make the pesticides regime even more restrictive. The UK Government is very concerned that the Council should not accept changes in the Second Reading which we believe could seriously damage European agriculture and have unintended consequences for the security of food supply and also for food prices.

We are working hard to put pressure on the European Commission, members of the European Parliament and other Member States. Officials are also in touch with stakeholder groups to encourage them to lobby MEPs and to work with their European counterparts to

promote similar action in other Member States. Any help you can give would of course be very welcome.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Genie B." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Dominic Dyer