

Food and Feed Safety Omnibus: Enabling Innovation for the Farmers' Toolbox

European farmers need quicker access to a broad, innovative toolbox: The Omnibus proposal is a positive step towards simplifying Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 and accelerating access to innovation, while maintaining the EU's high safety standards. The focus should now be on implementation choices that speed up procedures without creating new bottlenecks.

Simplification must support a balanced approach across the full toolbox: Biocontrol and conventional solutions are complementary and both are needed to enable farmers to diversify their options, support competitiveness, and deliver Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in practice.

The proposal introduces a new definition of biocontrol: CropLife Europe considers a future-proof, flexible definition a key prerequisite for legal clarity and for accelerating approval procedures for biocontrol solutions.

Background

On 16 December 2025, the European Commission published the Food & Feed Safety Omnibus proposal, introducing measures to simplify Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 on the placing on the market of plant protection products (PPPs). The proposal includes constructive steps to modernise the authorisation framework, reduce administrative burden for Member States and accelerate farmers' access to innovative tools, while maintaining the EU's high safety standards. In particular, the future-proof definition of biocontrols, faster procedures and rationalised processes can help certain innovations reach the European market more quickly.

However, the approach does not yet consistently support innovation across the full toolbox. Biocontrol solutions are an important part of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), but they are not a one-to-one replacement for conventional PPPs. Both biocontrol and conventional innovations are needed to manage pest pressure, resistance and productivity sustainably, and to ensure farmers can respond to diverse agronomic conditions across the EU.

Dedicated Lanes for all innovations

The proposal introduces a legal requirement for Member States to prioritise the evaluation of biocontrol solutions over conventional ones. While faster timelines for biocontrol are widely supported, a strict prioritisation mechanism risks further delaying farmers' access to much-needed conventional innovations. This is particularly problematic in a system already characterised by long approval timelines, uneven adherence to legal deadlines and existing backlogs in several Member States.

Biocontrol solutions should not be seen as a one-to-one replacement for conventional PPPs, but rather as complementary. They are indeed most effective when used in integrated programmes, alongside conventional tools – contributing to optimising chemical use, resistance management and, often, improved environmental impact. Together these solutions play an important role in building a wider, more robust toolbox for farmers through IPM practices. Rather than prioritising one type of innovation at the expense of another, the simplification agenda offers the opportunity to accelerate biocontrol while protecting the need for conventional dossiers. Other elements of the Omnibus package (such as continuous targeted oversight and targeted

reassessment) are also expected to help reallocate resources away from routine renewals towards the assessment of new solutions. In that context, dedicated lanes should be designed to support all innovations, applying a first-in, first-out approach within lanes and ensuring that authorities have sufficient dedicated capacity to deliver.

Provisional Authorisation for all innovation

The (re)introduction of provisional authorisations can support quicker access to innovation by allowing Member States to assess and authorise in their territory new tools that have already met the EU safety standards, before the EU-level approval process is finalised. However, by limiting this pathway to biocontrol and low-risk substances, the current proposal narrows the scope of innovations eligible for accelerated access and does not reflect farmers' diverse agronomic needs.

Provisional authorisation should therefore also be available to all PPPs containing new active substances, subject to the same safety safeguards. In addition, provisional authorisations should remain workable in practice: where EU-level decisions are pending, the framework should allow extensions to avoid unnecessary cliff-edge expiries that create uncertainty for farmers and authorities.

Mutual Recognition for all innovation

Mutual recognition enables national authorities to grant market access to a product that has already been assessed and authorised for comparable uses in another Member State. In practice, its application remains inconsistent, with varying national requirements and limited trust between authorities leading to duplication of work, divergent data requests and persistent fragmentation of the single market.

The proposal's introduction of automatic/tacit authorisation for biocontrol and low-risk products is a positive step, providing that a product is automatically recognised where a Member State does not respect the legal deadline. To maximise the benefit, this approach should not be limited by technology type. Its scope should be extended to all PPPs, and its practical implementation should be clarified to ensure consistent application and reduce unnecessary duplication.

Future-proof Biocontrol Definition

Croplife Europe supports the proposed definition of biocontrol as a key prerequisite for legal clarity and innovation. The wording is future-proof, encompassing both the current and emerging biocontrol technologies, and therefore should be maintained as proposed by the Commission.

One-zone System for biocontrol and low risk products

A single-zone system for the authorisation of biocontrol and low-risk products can reduce duplication, free resources for Member States and accelerate farmers' access to these tools. Under the proposal, biocontrol and low-risk products would be assessed by one Member State for the entire EU territory, rather than through the current three-zone system. CropLife Europe supports this simplification measure as a practical way to reduce administrative burden for authorities and solution providers and to improve the conditions for innovation in Europe.