



Council of the
European Union

077426/EU XXVI. GP
Eingelangt am 09/10/19

Brussels, 9 October 2019
(OR. en)

12882/19

AGRI 487
AGRIORG 62
AGRIFIN 60

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Serious damage caused by the Asian stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) to the fruit and vegetable sector
- Information from the Italian delegation

Delegations will find attached in Annex a note from the Italian delegation on the above subject, concerning an item under "Any other business" at the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 14-15 October 2019.

Serious damage caused by the Asian stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) to the fruit and vegetable sector

The Asian stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) is an insect originating from Asia that was accidentally introduced into the EU through the multiple routes of international trade. In Italy this bug is widespread all throughout the Country, in particular in the Northern Regions.

This year this insect has caused serious damage to the fruit and vegetable sector, affecting especially apples, pears, kiwis, peaches, cherries, apricots, but also maize, soya and sunflower. This bug represents a dangerous outbreak for agriculture, with a high risk of contagion.

The Asian stink bug is particularly dangerous because it rapidly proliferates, laying eggs at least twice a year with 300-400 specimens at a time. The insect damages the fruit, making them unusable for both consumption and processing, and seriously compromising all or part of the harvest. It is known that it is extremely difficult to put in place measures against such a harmful organism with the phytosanitary tools currently available. The possibility of applying biological control could be an alternative to conventional treatments but, its natural enemies, the Samurai wasps (*Trissolcus japonicus* and *Trissolcus mitsukurii*), are only recently authorized as antagonist insects and time is needed to assess concrete results. Therefore, farmers have had to put in place expensive measures (e.g.: installation of anti-insect nets, traps, etc.) in order to avoid the infestation.

However, despite all efforts made to prevent damage caused by the bug, affected farmers have been facing high costs with sensitive negative impact on their revenues, due to the halving of yields and, in some cases, no production has been harvested. Many of them are abandoning orchard production, causing also social damage to rural communities. For Italian farmers, an economic loss of more than 500 million euros has been currently estimated.

In this context, Italy urges the Commission to consider the possibility to adopt effective measures to face this problem, in particular by triggering the options provided by Art. 221 of Reg. (EU) No 1308/2013, in order to safeguard the key role that the fruit and vegetable Producer Organizations can play in this context.