



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate B – Sustainability

Brussels

agri.b.4(2022)2398001

Dear [REDACTED],

I would like to thank you for your email¹ of 3 March 2022, in which you ask, among others, whether electric weeding is permitted or not in organic farming.

There are no specific provisions concerning electric weeding techniques. However, as laid down under Annex II, part I, point 1.10.1 of Regulation (EU) 2018/848²: “ *The prevention of damage caused by pests and weeds shall rely primarily on the protection by:*

- *natural enemies,*
- *the choice of species, varieties and heterogeneous material,*
- *crop rotation,*
- *cultivation techniques such as biofumigation, mechanical and physical methods, and*
- *thermal processes such as solarisation and, in the case of protected crops, shallow steam treatment of the soil (to a maximum depth of 10 cm). ”*

Therefore, in principle, electric weeding being a physical method, it could be permitted. However, I would like to recall main relevant general principles laid down under Article 5, in particular Article 5(a) and (c), of Regulation (EU) 2018/848³: “*respect for nature’s systems and cycles and the sustainment and enhancement of the state of the soil, the water and the air, of the health of plants and animals , and of the balance between them; “ and “ the responsible use of energy and natural resources, such as water, soil, organic matter and air”.*

¹ ARES (2022)1707311

² [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation \(EC\) No 834/2007 \(OJ L 150, 14.6.2018 p.1 \)](#)

³ [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation \(EC\) No 834/2007 \(OJ L 150, 14.6.2018 p.1 \)](#)



It is therefore important to ensure that such principles are taken into account when evaluating the specific techniques to identify those most appropriate for organic production.

Finally, you may be interested to the final report of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group on Non-chemical weed management in arable cropping systems available at the following address: https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/sites/default/files/eip-agri_fg_non-chemical_weed_management_final_report_2020_en.pdf.

The present opinion is provided on the basis of the facts as set out in your email of 3 March 2022 and expresses the view of the Commission services and does not commit the European Commission. In the event of a dispute involving Union law it is, under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, ultimately for the European Court of Justice to provide a definitive interpretation of the applicable Union law.

Yours sincerely,

