

For Immediate Release

Cyprus Becomes the Third European Country to Issue Emergency Use Authorization for Vestaron Peptide-Based Bioinsecticide for Control of Tomato Leafminer

European access continues to expand for Vestaron's SPEAR® LEP insecticide bringing a much-needed tool to European farmers

May 14, 2024 – (Durham, North Carolina) – Cyprus has become the third country in the European Union to grant farmers emergency access to Vestaron's innovative bioinsecticide, SPEAR® LEP, to combat the destructive impact of tomato leafminer (*Tuta absoluta*) infestations — a menace known for causing substantial yield and economic losses for farmers across the Mediterranean region of Europe.

The Republic of Cyprus Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, and the Environment has authorized the emergency use of SPEAR LEP to provide growers in Cyprus with a new and potent tool to effectively manage tomato leafminer infestations. This authorization allows its use on tomatoes from May 2 to August 29, aligning with critical periods of pest activity in the region. In addition to tomato leafminer, SPEAR LEP targets other lepidopteran pests, including navel orangeworm, European grapevine moth, codling moth, loopers, and caterpillars. Notably, it is well-suited for integrated pest management strategies due to its unique mode of action, offering low toxicity to mammals, vertebrates, beneficial insects, and pollinators including bees. Cyprus joins Italy and Greece in granting emergency use authorization for SPEAR LEP, showcasing the growing recognition of its efficacy and environmental benefits.

Juan Estupinan, Vestaron's CEO and president, celebrated the milestone, stating: "Cyprus's decision reflects the urgent need for innovative solutions in agriculture to address evolving challenges. Vestaron is committed to providing farmers with effective, sustainable tools that safeguard both crop health and environmental well-being." Estupinan continued, "We heard from grower groups across the Mediterranean region about their need for a product such as ours and we're so pleased we can bring SPEAR LEP to them presently through the emergency use authorization. Our ongoing efforts include seeking full approval from the European Commission, underscoring our dedication to delivering cutting-edge crop protection solutions."

Premier Shukuroglou Cyprus Ltd., a distributor with in-house agronomy service submitted in February 2024 for an emergency use authorization on behalf of Cypriot tomato growers, to the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment, stating that it is pleased that the authorization has been granted, allowing tomato growers to effectively and sustainably control costly infestations of the pest *Tuta absoluta*.

“Having access to effective measures of biological origin such as SPEAR LEP is vital to helping producers overcome resistance— supporting production profitability while reducing the impact of agriculture on the environment,” said Kyriakos Orphanides, Technical Manager of Premier Shukuroglou Cyprus.

“With a unique mode of action, classified by IRAC as group 32, SPEAR LEP provides Cypriot tomato growers with a sustainable solution to use in rotation with other insecticides with different modes of action, helping to protect crop quality and yields while preserving the efficacy of the limited range of products available to combat this prevalent pest,” Said Orphanides.

The Cyprus Ministry of Agriculture's decision to grant emergency use authorization reflects the growing demand for effective and environmentally responsible crop protection solutions. Vestaron continues to lead the way in developing innovative bioinsecticides, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient agricultural industry.

SPEAR LEP has undergone rigorous testing across Europe, demonstrating its efficacy against target pests under various conditions, including populations resistant to conventional insecticides. This bioinsecticide's success lies in its novel mode of action (IRAC group 32), derived from naturally occurring peptides in spider venom and produced through natural fermentation processes. SPEAR LEP has no known resistance or cross-resistance with synthetic pesticides and presents minimal risk to people, pollinators, and beneficials as determined by USA EPA and Canadian PMRA regulatory approvals. It has gained traction in the United States since 2020, with subsequent approvals in Mexico and Canada, highlighting its global relevance and impact on sustainable agriculture practices.

About Vestaron

[Vestaron](#) is leading a global revolution in crop protection by creating novel, effective, and sustainable solutions our customers need to meet the growing challenges of modern agriculture. Founded in 2005 and headquartered in Durham, NC (USA), we are producing a pipeline of powerful insecticides with new modes of action based on peptides modified from the venom of spiders and other venomous animals. Naturally soft on pollinators, beneficials, and local biodiversity, our innovations have earned recognition from the Crop Science Awards and the EPA's Green Chemistry Challenge. In 2024, we became the first agriculture and food company inducted into the Global CleanTech 100 Hall of Fame. *Vestaron: Unconventional, by nature.SM*

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