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17 Abstract

Over the last decades, the intensification of agriculture has resulted in an increasing use of 18 19 pesticides, which has led to widespread contamination of non-target ecosystems in agricultural 20 landscapes. Plants and arthropods inhabiting these systems are therefore chronically exposed to, at least, low levels of pesticides through direct pesticide drift, but also through the 21 22 contamination of their nutrient sources (e.g. soil water or host/prey tissues). Pesticides (herbicides, acaricides/insecticides and fungicides) are chemical substances used to control 23 pests, such as weeds, phytophagous arthropods and pathogenic microorganisms. These 24 molecules are designed to disturb specific physiological mechanisms and induce mortality in 25 targeted organisms. However, under sublethal exposure, pesticides also affect biological 26 27 processes including metabolism, development, reproduction or inter-specific interactions even in organisms that do not possess the molecular target of the pesticide. Despite the broad current 28 knowledge on sublethal effects of pesticides on organisms, their adverse effects on trophic 29 30 interactions are less investigated, especially within terrestrial trophic networks. In this review, we provide an overview of the effects, both target and non-target, of sublethal exposures to 31 pesticides on traits involved in trophic interactions between plants, phytophagous insects and 32 their natural enemies. We also discuss how these effects may impact ecosystem functioning by 33 analyzing studies investigating the responses of Plant-Phytophage-Natural enemy trophic 34 networks to pesticides. Finally, we highlight the current challenges and research prospects in 35 the understanding of the effects of pesticides on trophic interactions and networks in non-target 36 terrestrial ecosystems. 37

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Journal

# 44 Graphical abstract



# 45

# 46 1. Introduction

The capacity of pesticides to increase yield and to regulate crop production, their low cost and 47 easy usage have contributed to their worldwide spread (Popp et al., 2013). This expansion of 48 49 pesticide use, urged by agrochemical industries, led to a shift in agricultural practices, rooting pesticides as a standard and unavoidable solution for efficient food production (Clapp, 2021). 50 This technological lock-in in agricultural activities has led to the global current consumption of 51 two to three million tons of pesticides annually (Popp et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2019). 52 Pesticides are chemical substances classified into three main categories, herbicides, 53 insecticides/acaricides and fungicides that control pests, such as weeds, phytophagous 54 arthropods and pathogenic fungi, respectively. Each category includes several modes of action 55 designed to target specific proteins and related physiological or biochemical processes. In 56 57 addition to the rising concern of resistant pest outbreaks that make pesticides less efficient (Bass et al., 2015; Neve et al., 2014), a major concern relative to pesticide use is the wide 58 contamination of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems (Arias-Estévez et al., 2008; Björklund et 59 60 al., 2011; Silva et al., 2019).

In agricultural and related adjacent ecosystems, trophic systems involving plants, phytophages and their arthropod natural enemies have great ecological and economic importance (Gurr et al., 2003; Ives et al., 2000; Wilby and Thomas, 2002). In fact, several phytophagous arthropods are agricultural pests, annually causing crop losses ranging from 5 to 50% (Gurr et al., 2003;

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Oliveira et al., 2014). Natural enemies, whether they are predatory arthropods or parasitoid 65 insects, induce the death of phytophagous insects by killing them either directly, or indirectly, 66 as a result of their development on or into their hosts (Eggleton and Gaston, 1990). These Plant-67 Phytophage-Natural enemy (hereafter mentioned as PPNe) trophic systems are based on 68 nutrient and energy flows (nitrogen compounds, sugars, lipids, water) circulating vertically 69 from a trophic level to another (Stam et al., 2014). Species within these systems also interact 70 through chemical signals involving non-volatile and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) 71 perceived by upper trophic levels (Stam et al., 2014; Unsicker et al., 2009). The tight links 72 between plants, phytophagous insects and natural enemies lead to bottom-up and top-down 73 74 regulations of populations through the modulation of abundance and/or quality of interacting species between trophic levels. For example, a decrease in plant quality can reduce the fitness 75 of phytophagous insects and therefore their availability and/or quality as hosts/preys for natural 76 77 enemies (Bottom-up regulation; Stenberg, 2015; Zaugg et al., 2013). On the other hand, natural enemies can reduce phytophage populations to densities at which plants experience low levels 78 of herbivory and therefore display an increased fitness (Top-down regulation ; Halaj and Wise, 79 2001; Zaugg et al., 2013). Such capacity of natural enemies to improve yield is crucial for 80 agrosystems and is used in biocontrol strategies (Roudine et al., 2023; Rutledge et al., 2004; 81 82 Stiling and Cornelissen, 2005). This regulation process also relies on mutualistic interactions between plants and natural enemies, plants providing protective habitats, food subsidies, and 83 attractive signals allowing natural enemies to increase their efficiency to control pests (Quispe 84 85 et al., 2017; Tylianakis et al., 2004; Unsicker et al., 2009).

In agricultural landscapes, terrestrial PPNe trophic systems are chronically exposed to a wide diversity of pesticides and related degradation products, either directly in crop fields or in nontarget adjacent refuge ecosystems such as field margins, vegetated buffer strips, or flowering strips (Björklund et al., 2011; Krutz et al., 2005; Serra et al., 2013). These contaminations may

occur through spray drift during application or through subsequent runoffs in soil water (Loewy
et al., 2011). On the one hand, edaphic contaminations resulting from leaching lead to exposure
and contamination of the trophic system through pesticide transfer from the plant to upper
trophic levels (Calvo-Agudo et al., 2019; Goulson, 2013; Stapel et al., 2000). On the other hand,
spray-drift leads to direct deposition of pesticides onto organisms, and consequently to tissue
contamination due to diffusion through plants' or insects' cuticle (Balabanidou et al., 2018;
Wang and Liu, 2007).

Numerous studies on terrestrial PPNe organisms reported the effects of high doses of pesticides, 97 mainly field application rates, and focused on target-related effects, i.e. the effects on the 98 99 specific biological processes targeted by pesticides in the targeted phyla (e.g., herbicides inhibiting photosynthesis in plants, insecticides inhibiting nervous activity in insects) (Guedes 100 et al., 2016). Many studies also examined the effects of a wide range of pesticides at lower 101 102 doses on target organisms and, to a lesser extent, on non-target organisms, among various taxa (reviewed in Parween et al., 2016; Teder and Knapp, 2019; Table S1). These lower doses 103 usually remain non-lethal or sublethal (i.e. leaving a majority of individuals alive), and therefore 104 lead to more discrete effects such as physiological disturbances, impairments in development 105 106 and reproduction, or changes in behavior. However, reviews on the effects of pesticides rarely 107 focus on species interactions and trophic system functioning, especially in terrestrial food webs, despite available empirical data on individuals' traits that are key to trophic interactions. Our 108 aim is to review the effects of sublethal and non-lethal pesticide exposures on PPNe food webs 109 110 by analyzing relevant features of each trophic level in the context of trophic interactions and, when available, the responses of interacting organisms (Table S1). Indeed, understanding the 111 impacts of a stress on biotic interactions is essential to link individual trait responses to 112 community/food web responses (Gross et al., 2009; Schmitz et al., 2015). This review provides 113 a better understanding of the cascading effects of pesticides between trophic levels and of the 114

consequences on trophic system functioning. First, it focuses on the few studies examining the 115 effects of pesticides on PPNe networks, mainly at high doses. The review then reports how 116 exposures to lower, sublethal doses of pesticides may alter host/prey selection by phytophages 117 and natural enemies and, more generally, how they may modulate the emission of signals that 118 regulate interactions between species. Then, it analyzes how sublethal pesticide exposures may 119 affect attack and defense mechanisms of PPNe organisms, and how they impact hosts'/preys' 120 nutritional value while considering the consequences on upper trophic levels. It last assesses 121 how such exposures may affect the dynamics of the populations of each trophic level and 122 therefore of the trophic system functioning. It finally discusses the implications of the outlined 123 results in the scope of agriculture, pesticide use and pest management strategies. 124

# 125 **2.** Methodology (509 words)

To identify the studies investigating the effect of pesticides on PPNe interactions and complete 126 trophic networks, a first literature search was carried out by using keyword-based screening in 127 the publication databases (Google scholar, web of knowledge, etc.): pesticides (OR herbicide 128 OR insecticide OR fungicide) AND trophic interaction (OR trophic network OR trophic chain). 129 Then, a more specific literature search was performed to identify the studies focusing on non-130 131 lethal and sublethal effects at lower doses on single or interacting organisms by using the following keywords: pesticides (OR herbicide OR insecticide OR fungicide) AND low (OR 132 non-lethal OR sublethal OR residual) AND dose (OR concentration OR level). 133

This screening of the literature allowed to collect a panel of studies ranging from 1970 to 2023 that were then sorted according to several criteria. First, only publications assessing the responses of land plants, terrestrial herbivorous arthropods and/or arthropod natural enemies were kept. Second, empirical studies using ecologically relevant exposure routes for investigating consequences on trophic interactions (i.e. through food consumption for insects or root uptake for plants) were selected. Third, publications investigating traits relevant in the

scope of trophic interactions (cues for other trophic levels, attack/defense mechanisms, 140 metabolism and physiology related to quality as hosts, population features) or directly assessing 141 the responses of interacting organisms to pesticides were considered. This procedure excluded 142 numerous studies that only assessed survival/damage responses of organisms to pesticide 143 exposure such as standardized dose-response studies for ecotoxicological assays. Finally, 144 publications investigating pesticide effects on organisms surviving doses inducing high 145 mortality rates in arthropods (>LC<sub>30</sub> i.e. above the concentration inducing 30% of mortality 146 within the population) or high damages/impairments in plants (> $EC_{30}$  i.e. above the 147 concentration inducing an effect on individuals within the population) were excluded, even if 148 149 doses were described as low (Cutler et al., 2022; Jalal et al., 2021). These thresholds of lethality (arthropods) and growth inhibition/damage (plants) are commonly used in ecotoxicological 150 assays and considered relevant to characterize the intensity of pesticide effects on a given 151 species (Calow and Forbes, 2003; Hill et al., 2000). Studies of non-target effects considering 152 high doses, sometimes equivalent to field rates, were conserved as the effects remained mainly 153 sublethal or even non-lethal (García et al., 2002; Saska et al., 2016; Schneider et al., 2009). 154

Selected literature was then categorized by "type of organism", corresponding to the trophic 155 level on which the study focused, and by the number of interacting trophic levels (Bredeson et 156 al., 2015; Deng et al., 2019; Tran et al., 2004; Yao, 2015; Table S1). For instance, several 157 studies assessed the responses of a single trophic level or of more trophic levels but not 158 necessarily in interaction (Cordeiro et al., 2013; Ricupero et al., 2020). When the responses of 159 different trophic levels were assessed, the study was accounted once for each level (Figure 4, 160 5). In addition, the species, pesticide and dose were filled out for each study. Concerning the 161 162 effects on traits, they were characterized based on the main highlights summarized in the publication abstract, and categorized following the different sections of this review (Figure 4; 163 Table S1). 164

# 3. What can we draw from responses of complete PPNe systems to pesticides at fieldrates?

Most of the current literature on the effects of low pesticide doses focuses on one to two 167 168 organisms at most, usually in controlled conditions and without involving interactions. Only few studies assessed the effects of low doses of pesticides on interacting organisms and only 169 two focused on complete PPNe trophic systems (Table S1; Bredeson et al., 2015; Uhl et al., 170 2015). There are a few more studies investigating the effects of pesticides on PPNe systems at 171 field doses, which are generally partially lethal to one organism of the network (Table S1). 172 Here, we summarize the effects of pesticides on complete PPNe trophic systems, to better 173 understand how pesticides could affect their functioning. 174

Studies carried out on various PPNe systems investigated the effects of insecticides at field rates 175 (Bommarco et al., 2011; Calvo-Agudo et al., 2019; Douglas et al., 2015; Kampfraath et al., 176 2017; Zhang et al., 2016) but also at lower doses (Bredeson et al., 2015; Uhl et al., 2015). 177 Imidacloprid applied on soil at field rates, reduced both the fitness of the phytophagous insect, 178 Nemobius sylvestris (Orthoptera: Trigonidiidae), feeding on Fragaria vesca plantlets 179 (Rosaceae) and the predation efficiency of its spider natural enemy, Pisaura mirabilis (Araneae: 180 181 Pisauridae) (Uhl et al., 2015). Similar effects were found in response to lower rates of insecticides, equivalent to those found in field margins, suggesting that insecticides may induce 182 negative effects at both field application and residual levels (Bredeson et al., 2015; Uhl et al., 183 184 2015). Several studies carried out on various PPNe models however showed that edaphic exposure to field-rate insecticides could significantly reduce plant biomass and fitness as well 185 186 as natural enemy efficiency without affecting phytophages (Bommarco et al., 2011; Douglas et al., 2015; Kampfraath et al., 2017). This bypass is thought to be due to a lower sensitivity of 187 phytophages to chemical stress compared to their natural enemies (Jonsson et al., 2012; 188 Monsreal-Ceballos et al., 2018). Indeed, phytophages are frequently exposed to natural toxic 189

compounds (see section 5.2.1.2) which often leads to increased pesticide tolerance, mostly 190 through detoxication or sequestration mechanisms (Alyokhin and Chen, 2017; Heckel, 2014). 191 Nevertheless, opposite effects were also reported in one field study on a wheat-aphid-parasitoid 192 system, where insecticide seed coating decreased aphid infestation with no significant impact 193 on ladybird, hoverfly and parasitoid populations (Zhang et al., 2016). In addition, sequestration 194 and accumulation of insecticides or of their degradation products in specific tissues or 195 byproducts of phytophages may lead to an acute exposure of natural enemies. Calvo-Agudo et 196 al. (2019) observed an negative effect of plant exposure to insecticides on parasitoid fitness 197 through pesticide circulation from the plant up to aphid honeydew. 198

In the meantime, a few field studies focused on the effects of herbicides on arthropod 199 communities, to assess their non-target effects on trophic networks (Albajes et al., 2009; 200 Atwood et al., 2018; Kampfraath et al., 2017). Glyphosate treatment in herbicide-tolerant corn 201 fields led to significant shifts in both primary and secondary consumer communities, which 202 could ultimately disturb ecosystem functioning (Albajes et al., 2009). While leafhopper and 203 204 aphid phytophagous insects as well as mymarid parasitoids were more abundant on herbicidetreated plots, phytophagous thrips and ichneumonid parasitoids were predominant in untreated 205 plots. Moreover, natural enemies were significantly harmed by an herbicide (2,6-206 dichlorobenzonitrile, DCBN), either through bottom-up effects or directly via non-target effects 207 of the herbicide and its degradation products, while phytophagous insects such as aphids 208 seemed to be much less affected (Kampfraath et al., 2017). 209

Most of these studies underline that, in complete PPNe systems, exposure of plants to field rates of pesticides can lead to deleterious effects on phytophages, but mostly on natural enemies, even when they are exposed only through the food chain (Calvo-Agudo et al., 2019; Douglas et al., 2015; Kampfraath et al., 2017). However, depending on the considered molecule and its dose, the effects observed can strongly differ in terms of traits, species, and trophic level

affected. It thus seems that, even though pesticide effects are still observed under lower rates 215 of pesticide exposure (Bredeson et al., 2015; Uhl et al., 2015), studies at field rates are not 216 217 sufficient to provide a comprehensive understanding of how terrestrial trophic systems react to sublethal doses of pesticides. Due to the scarcity of studies on complete PPNe systems under 218 low pesticide exposure, and the bias toward studies on insecticides compared to other pesticides 219 (Table S1), it is necessary to consider the numerous studies carried out on single organisms or 220 221 2-partner interaction systems exposed to sublethal rates of pesticides to better understand how they affect trophic interactions. This can be achieved by focusing on pesticide effects on traits 222 that shape interactions within trophic networks (e.g. host/prey cues for the upper trophic level, 223 224 attack/defense mechanisms, host/prey quality...).

# **4.** How sublethal doses of pesticides affect cues for patch and host/prey selection within

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# PPNe systems: from the emission of chemical and physical cues to their perception

# 4.1. Pesticide effects on olfactory cues in plants and phytophages

228 Plants emit Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) in species specific mixtures characterized by their composition and concentration (Aartsma, 2017; Anderson and Anton, 2014). These 229 cocktails of volatile compounds give cues to arthropods, including phytophages and natural 230 enemies, about the location and physiological state of plants. Moreover, under phytophagy, 231 VOC profiles can change due to active defense responses from plants. Their effects range from 232 phytophage repelling to natural enemy attraction (Aartsma, 2017; Bernasconi et al., 1998; 233 Clavijo McCormick et al., 2012; Das et al., 2013; Heil, 2008; Moraes et al., 2001; Sarkar et al., 234 2014). Insects also emit VOCs, such as pheromones involved in intraspecific communication 235 (e.g. sexual, aggregation and alarm) and kairomones associated to activity byproducts (e.g. 236 feces and secretions such as honeydew), that can be used by natural enemies for host/prey 237 location and choice (Benelli et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 1976). Here, we report how low doses 238 of pesticides alter olfactory cues emitted by plants and phytophages, and how they disturb the 239 perception of these cues by natural enemies. 240

Sublethal doses of pesticides alter the spectrum of VOCs emitted under phytophagy and 241 therefore disrupt attraction of natural enemies (Figure 1). This can occur through their impact 242 on plant metabolism. For example, exposure of maize to non-lethal, field rates of glyphosate 243 244 led to a significant decrease in the emission of shikimic acid derivatives such as indole, known to attract natural enemies (Aljbory and Chen, 2018; D'Alessandro et al., 2006). However, 245 several studies underlined that herbicides could also increase herbivore-induced VOC 246 production by plants and attract natural enemies (Rao, 1996; Rao et al., 1999; Xin et al., 2012). 247 Indeed, low doses of 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2-4D), an herbicide acting as homolog 248 of auxin phytohormone, strongly promoted defense pathways in rice and led to higher 249

production of defensive VOCs such as the sesquiterpenes (E,E)-a-farnesene and (E)-bcaryophyllene (Xin et al., 2012). Application of 2,4-D therefore increased the attraction of the natural enemies of the leafhopper *Nilaparvata lugens* (Hemiptera: Delphacidae) (Xin et al., 2012). This attraction of natural enemies could occur by directly affecting plant metabolism and related VOC biosynthesis, but also by modulating plant signaling pathways, especially those involved in plant defenses (see section 5.2).

Inhibition of phytophage pheromone or kairomone production by pesticides has been rarely 256 documented (Table S1). Exposure to sublethal doses of thiacloprid (neonicotinoid) and 257 azinphosmethyl (organophosphate) insecticides, but also to non-lethal doses of several 258 herbicides such as diclofop, led to a decrease in the quantity of pheromones produced by female 259 moths (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae and Noctuidae) (Navarro-Roldán and Gemeno, 2017; Trimble 260 et al., 2004; Hanin et al., 2008 respectively). Since parasitoids often use sex pheromones to 261 locate their host, a pesticide-induced shift in quantity or quality of these olfactory cues may 262 disrupt host-parasitoid interactions (Hardie et al., 1991; Powell et al., 1993). Concerning 263 kairomones, no study has to our knowledge reported direct effects of pesticides on their 264 production nor their composition. However, given that pesticides can alter insects' metabolism 265 (see section 6.2), the quantity and composition of these insect activity byproducts are also likely 266 to be altered. 267

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# 4.2. Pesticide effects on visual and contact cues in plants and phytophages

In most arthropod species, visual and contact cues become critical over short distances because VOCs generally do not provide information precise enough for the discrimination of individuals close to each other (Bernays and Chapman, 1994; Morehead and Feener, 2000). Moreover, these additional cues allow to precisely assess the quality of the host/prey (Bernays and Chapman, 1994; Mackauer et al., 1996; Muratori et al., 2006; Prokopy and Owens, 1983).

While cues' assessment modalities vary within both phytophages and natural enemies, size remains a determining factor in host/prey choice (Bernays and Chapman, 1994; Mackauer et al., 1996; Muratori et al., 2006). Any detrimental effect of sublethal doses of pesticides on plant and phytophage size could therefore decrease attraction of upper trophic levels and alter trophic interactions (Figure 1, Lauro et al., 2005; Lacoume et al., 2006).

Plant growth is inhibited by sublethal rates of herbicides from very different families, including 279 synthetic auxins like 2-4 D, photosynthesis inhibitors like triazines and phenylureas, or even 280 inhibitors of specific metabolic pathways such as glyphosate (Baillard et al., 2021; Boutin et 281 al., 2004; Colquhoun et al., 2012; Florencia et al., 2017; Marrs and Frost, 1997; Mateos-Naranjo 282 283 and Perez-Martin, 2013; McCown et al., 2018; Ramel et al., 2009; Scholtes et al., 2019; Sulmon 284 et al., 2004). Fungicides and insecticides were also shown to have non-target deleterious effects on plant height and mass, even at low doses (Çavuşoğlu et al., 2012b; Duran et al., 2015; Serra 285 286 et al., 2013, 2015). An increase of plant growth was however observed punctually, for fungicides from the benzimidazole family, due to pesticide structural similarities with growth-287 promoting phytohormones such as cytokinins (García et al., 2002; Schruft, 1970; Thomas, 288 1974, 1973). 289

Several pesticides decrease the size of phytophagous insects, even at low doses (Bohnenblust 290 291 et al., 2013; Daniels et al., 2009; Hahn et al., 2014; Li et al., 2010; Müller, 2017; Müller et al., 292 2019). For example, exposure to a sublethal dose of thiamethoxam insecticide (neonicotinoid) led to a decrease of *Rhopalosiphum padi* growth (Hemiptera: Aphididae) (Daniels et al., 2009). 293 294 Such effect on phytophage size was also demonstrated for non-target compounds such as herbicides and fungicides (Bohnenblust et al., 2013; Clements et al., 2018; Hahn et al., 2014) 295 and could be explained by direct but still unknown pesticide actions on phytophage (Clements 296 et al., 2018) and/or by indirect effects related to host plant quality. 297

Among other visual cues used by arthropods for host/prey recognition, color often drives 298 host/prey choice, both by phytophages and natural enemies. For example, chlorophyll and 299 carotenoid contents signal plant quality as a host (high chlorophyll content being attractive and 300 high carotenoid content being repellent ; Archetti, 2000; Sauvion et al., 2013; Schaefer and 301 Rolshausen, 2006; Zhong et al., 2019). For most insects, bright colors often indicate toxicity 302 and pale colors usually reflect poor nutritional status (Langley et al., 2006; Libbrecht et al., 303 2007; Taylor et al., 2014; Théry and Gomez, 2010). Thus, host/prey color set its attractivity for 304 phytophages and natural enemies (Langley et al., 2006; Libbrecht et al., 2007). 305

Pigment contents contributing to plant color can be modified by pesticides (Table S1, Figure 306 307 1). For example, sublethal levels of glyphosate reduced chlorophyll contents, leading to yellowing and to decreased phytophage attraction (Mateos-Naranjo and Perez-Martin, 2013; 308 Munoz-Rueda et al., 1986; Serra et al., 2015; Zhong et al., 2019). Similarly, other herbicides 309 310 inducing leaf bleaching, such as photosynthesis inhibitors of the triazine (e.g. atrazine), phenylurea (e.g. isoproturon), and bipyridyl (e.g. paraquat) families, could also affect host 311 choice by phytophages (Dodge, 1990). Concerning non-target effects, the insecticides 312 cypermethrin and deltamethrin, as well as the fungicide tebuconazole, decreased chlorophyll 313 and carotenoid contents in several plant species (Çavuşoğlu et al., 2012a; Duran et al., 2015; 314 315 Serra et al., 2013). However, these effects seem at least species-dependent, as low doses of tebuconazole were found to increase chlorophyll and carotenoid contents in Lolium perenne 316 (Poaceae) (Serra et al., 2015). 317

In insects, color results from endogenous compounds synthesized from small metabolites such as tryptophan or dopamine (melanin and ommochromes), or from exogenous compounds mainly acquired from plants (carotenoids and flavonoids) (Hashimoto et al., 2021; Moran and Jarvik, 2010; Sloan and Moran, 2012). To date, no direct effect of pesticides on insect color has been recorded. However, stresses such as starvation and cold temperature alter body color to

paler shades in aphids due to energy reallocation processes (Wang et al., 2019; L. Zhang et al.,
2021). It is thus possible that sublethal doses of pesticides could lead to similar body color
alterations because of the energetic cost related to chemical stress responses (Castañeda et al.,
2009).

Many natural enemies, and especially predators, also rely on movement to find hosts/prey 327 (Théry and Gomez, 2010). Most neurotoxic insecticides induce paralysis or death at field rates 328 and decrease insect mobility at sublethal doses, which could reduce their localization by natural 329 enemies (Boiteau and Osborn, 1997; Jung et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2013; Silva Barros et al., 330 2020). For example, doses between LC<sub>10</sub> and LC<sub>30</sub> of the neurotoxic insecticides carbaryl, 331 chlorpyrifos and thiacloprid led to a significant decrease in the mobility of Halyomorpha halys 332 (Hemiptera: Pentatomidae) (Lee et al., 2013). In some rare cases, mobility however increased 333 but only for a short time after an acute sublethal exposure to insecticides such as dianizon and 334 phosmet (Lee et al., 2013). 335

In the last steps of host/prey selection by both phytophages and natural enemies, contact cues, 336 mostly linked to cuticle texture and composition, determine whether or not the host/prey is 337 suitable (Lang and Menzel, 2011; Ramaswamy, 1988; Sauvion et al., 2013). Sublethal doses of 338 pesticides were shown to deeply modify both chemical and structural patterns of plant and 339 insect cuticle, yet the importance of such alteration on trophic interactions remain to be 340 assessed. For example, texture of eucalyptus' leaf cuticle was damaged by drift exposure to 341 commercial formulations of glyphosate, and field rates of the herbicide EPTC altered the 342 composition of epicuticular waxes in Brassica oleacera (Brassicaceae) (Flore and Bukovac, 343 1978; Tuffi Santos et al., 2009). The insecticide diflubenzuron, led to an alteration of cuticle 344 345 elasticity and firmness by inhibiting chitin synthesis and deposition, even at low doses (Ishaaya, 2001; Wei et al., 2013). Sublethal doses of a pyrethroid insecticide also induced shifts in the 346 hydrocarbon composition of adult leaf beetles' cuticle (Müller, 2017). 347

In summary, visual and contact cues used by insects for host/prey selection are broadly altered by sublethal doses of pesticides (Figure 1). While target pesticides mainly lead to decreased attractivity, other pesticides often have opposite effects. However, these non-target effects are far less studied (Figure 4), less consistent among the current literature, and the underlying mechanisms are still unknown. Overall, sublethal effects of pesticides on visual and contact cues are likely to disturb trophic interactions by interfering with host/prey recognition/selection, mostly by making exposed organisms less appealing (Figure 1, 3).

# **4.3. Pesticide effects on cue perception and signal integration**

356 The effects of pesticides on the responses of natural enemies to various cues (mostly olfactory) have been thoroughly studied (Figure 1, Table S1). For example, nearly non-lethal doses (< 357 LC<sub>5</sub>) of the neonicotinoid imidacloprid significantly reduced the ability of the parasitoid 358 Nasonia vitripennis (Hymenoptera: Pteromalidae) to locate its host through olfactory cues 359 (Tappert et al., 2017). Higher sublethal doses however have contrasted outcomes, with exposure 360 to deltamethrin decreasing the time spent on a kairomone patch while chlorpyrifos increased it 361 (Delpuech et al., 2005; Komeza et al., 2001; Salerno et al., 2002). The ability of natural enemies 362 to perceive VOC signals emitted by plants can also be impaired by sublethal doses of pesticides 363 364 (Liu et al., 2012, 2010; Teodoro et al., 2009). For example, the predatory mite Iphiseiodes *zuluagai* (Arachnida: Phytoseiidae) is unable to recognize a plant previously infested by its prev 365 after an exposure to sublethal doses of the acaricide febutatin oxide (Teodoro et al., 2009). 366 367 Concerning behaviors related to other cue perception, the pyrethroid lambda-cyhalothrin reduced the occurrence of host-tapping behavior by Neochrysocharis formosa (Hymenoptera: 368 Eulophidae) and thus its ability to assess host size (Tran et al., 2004). 369

While studies on phytophage olfaction are scarce, insecticides were often shown to reduce pheromone perception, which could underline a general impairment of olfactory faculties (Wang et al., 2011; Zhou et al., 2005). By contrast, the only study investigating the effects of

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sublethal doses of pesticides on plant VOC perception by phytophages did not report any 373 374 modification of insect responses to plant odors (Lalouette et al., 2016).

Altogether, the results presented in this section underlined that the responses of natural enemies 375

376 to host/prey signals could be impaired by sublethal exposure to at least insecticides (Table S1,

Figure 1, Figure 3). Moreover, since detrimental effects on cue emission (making hosts/preys 377

less appealing) and perception tend to have synergistic outcomes, it seems that sublethal doses 378

379 of pesticides could effectively alter trophic interactions.

-s,



Figure 1: Main effects of sublethal doses of pesticides on host/prey recognition mechanisms 381 and attack/defense mechanisms in land plants, phytophages and natural enemies. While grey 382 arrows represent interactions within PPNe networks, blue arrows represent the effects of 383 sublethal doses of pesticides on traits involved in those interactions. Flat-head arrows indicate 384 an overall decrease of the trait, while point-head arrows indicate an increase. Dashed white 385 arrows indicate a lack of knowledge on the effects. The effects of pesticides on each trait, 386 represented by the different pictograms, are indicated in the associated inserts, with (+), (-) and 387 (?) depending on the effect (increase, decrease, no known effect respectively). 388

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- **5.** How sublethal doses of pesticides alter attack and defense mechanisms in organisms
- 390 within trophic networks
- **5.1.** Pesticide effects on insect attack behaviors
- 392

# 5.1.1. Phytophage feeding behaviors

Feeding mechanisms in phytophages are well known to be impaired by insecticides, which 393 primary role is to limit phytophagy (Table S1). Whereas some insecticides are specifically 394 designed to prevent feeding (Ishaaya, 2001), neuroactive insecticides, mainly represented by 395 neonicotinoids, generally impair behavior in phytophagous insects (Table S1). For instance, 396 wheat seed treatment with neonicotinoid insecticides reduced both probing and feeding in 397 Sitobion avenae (Hemiptera: Aphididae) (Miao et al., 2014). Even at low doses, this decrease 398 in feeding behavior has been observed in many phytophagous insects exposed to a variety of 399 insecticides (Chen et al., 2017; He et al., 2013; Jacobson and Kennedy, 2014; Li et al., 2010; 400 Okano, 2009; Seo, Mi Ja et al., 2009; Stamm et al., 2013; Wolz et al., 2021; Yuan et al., 2017). 401 Moreover, sublethal rates of insecticides can simply affect insect mobility, and therefore their 402 403 ability to colonize new plants (Boiteau and Osborn, 1997; Lee et al., 2013; Silva Barros et al., 2020). Without impairing nervous activities, pesticides can also have non-target effects on 404 phytophage attack behaviors, even at low doses. For example, the herbicide atrazine induced 405 gut lesions in insects that are thought to increase feeding behavior by a decrease in satiety 406 (Behmer, 2009; Ganassi et al., 1996). Therefore, the non-target effects of other types of 407 pesticides on feeding mechanisms remain to be studied more extensively since they may lead 408 409 to unexpected increases in feeding behaviors.

410

# 5.1.2. Attack and foraging behaviors of natural enemies

Low doses of pesticides can decrease the attack behaviors of predators and parasitoids.
Insecticides, by affecting nervous activity, impact prey capture in predators and oviposition
rates in parasitoids (Claver et al., 2003; Desneux et al., 2004; Longley and Jepson, 1996;

Martinou and Stavrinides, 2015; Shang et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2004; Tooming et al., 2017; 414 Tran et al., 2004; Yao, 2015). For instance, , the predation rate of coccinellid, carabid and mite 415 predators decreased after being sprayed with sublethal levels of neuroactive insecticides 416 (Martinou and Stavrinides, 2015) but also after consuming contaminated preys (Singh et al., 417 2004; Tooming et al., 2017; Yao, 2015). Sublethal doses of neuroactive insecticides also 418 decrease host parasitism rates of several parasitic wasps (Desneux et al., 2007; Sheng et al., 419 2021; Stapel et al., 2000; Tran et al., 2004). Despite such effects of neuroactive insecticides 420 could be expected, these results highlight the extent of the action spectrum of these molecules, 421 which goes far beyond the targeted phytophagous species, with significant consequences on 422 423 trophic interactions (Figure 1). However, to our knowledge, the effects of other pesticides such as fungicides, herbicides, or non-neuroactive insecticides on attack behaviors in natural enemies 424 remain unknown. 425

### 5.2. Pesticide effects on host physiological defense mechanisms and enemy virulence 426

### 5.2.1. Plant defenses against phytophages and phytophage counter-attack 427

428 Action of phytophagous insects being usually deleterious to plants, plant species evolved mechanisms in order to defend themselves against these negative biotic interactions (War et al., 429 430 2012). To counter-attack these mechanisms, phytophages in return can avoid or deter many plant defenses through physiological alteration processes. For instance, several phytophages are 431 able to either degrade or sequestrate plant toxins, therefore suppressing one of the main defenses 432 of their host (Heckel, 2014). Here we review how pesticides can alter herbivore-induced plant 433 defenses and the responses of phytophages to these defense mechanisms. 434

435

### Plant defense mechanisms against phytophages 5.2.1.1.

Constitutive plant defenses include various mechanisms leading to non-preference by 436 phytophages. These mechanisms include physical barriers but also constitutively emitted 437

repellent chemicals. Indeed, some plants emit specific, unappealing VOCs to reduce 438 phytophage attraction, especially among Solanaceae (Unsicker et al., 2009). This mechanism 439 is affected by sublethal doses of herbicides. For example, the herbicide chlorosulfuron 440 decreased the constitutive biosynthesis of unappealing sucrose esters by secretory cells within 441 tobacco trichomes (Kandra and Wagner, 1990). Moreover, sublethal rates of herbicides may 442 alter the efficiency of physical barriers such as trichome density (Levin, 1973). Sublethal doses 443 of carbamate herbicides thus disrupted microtubule formation in Allium cepa (Liliaceae), which 444 can lead to reduced trichome growth, as shown in Arabidopsis thaliana (Brassicaceae) 445 (Giménez-Albian, 1997; Mathur and Chua, 2000). 446

Antibiosis is an inducible, post-contact or post-consumption defense during which plants alter 447 their chemical and nutritional content in order to affect insect physiology, behavior and survival 448 (Sauvion et al., 2013). Because it requires the production of secondary metabolites not only 449 useless for growth and reproduction but potentially toxic for the plant, this strategy is highly 450 energy consuming, and not constitutive (Prasad, 2022; Ramaroson et al., 2022; Sauvion et al., 451 452 2013). Antibiosis mechanisms are generally triggered by molecules called elicitors that are 453 found in the saliva of phytophages, or by signal molecules coming from damaged cell walls. These signals activate two different signaling pathways, either the jasmonate/ethylene pathway 454 or the salicylate pathway, depending on the type of aggressor (chewing insects and sap-sucking 455 insects respectively) (De Vos and Jander, 2009; Thaler et al., 2012). Each response pathway 456 leads to the production of a large array of secondary metabolites and proteins. 457

458 Salicylate production can be activated by sublethal doses of herbicides (Alberto et al., 2018; Lu 459 et al., 2018) but also by insecticides and fungicides (Bian et al., 2020; Ford et al., 2010). For 460 example, in *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Brassicaceae), several genes involved in plant defense 461 against phytophagy were upregulated under exposure to low doses of the herbicide atrazine 462 (Alberto et al., 2018). Pesticide exposure could therefore act as a defense priming mechanism

that may lead to stronger defenses against phytophages, and especially sap-sucking insects (Figure 1). Another argument supporting this hypothesis is that sublethal doses of pesticides increase the emission of defensive VOCs known to be part of the salicylate and jasmonate/ethylene response pathways (Figure 1, Aljbory and Chen, 2018). However, these studies being focused on plants in absence of phytophagy, it remains to be determined if pesticide exposure could increase antibiosis defenses against phytophagous insects and actually reduce phytophagy.

Pesticides, and more particularly herbicides, may disrupt plant inducible defenses by affecting 470 the synthesis of secondary metabolites involved in antibiosis. On the one hand, several 471 herbicides such as glyphosate specifically target key metabolic steps, synthetizing precursors 472 of plant defensive compounds, such as flavonoids, alkaloids, phenols or gallic acids (Canal et 473 al., 1987; Deng, 2005; Lydon and Duke, 1988), thus leading to a reduction of defensive 474 compounds such as phenylpropanoids (Hollander and Amrhein, 1980). On the other hand, it 475 seems that defensive compounds such as isoflavones and phenylpropanoids are overproduced 476 477 in response to generic pesticide stress (i.e. photosynthesis inhibitors, phytohormone analogs, insecticides and fungicides not targeting plant defensive compound metabolic pathways), 478 probably due to the oxidative stress it generates and/or the activation of salicylate/jasmonate 479 signaling pathways as explained above (Dixon and Paiva, 1995; Kömives and Casida, 1982; 480 Landini et al., 2003; Mahdavi et al., 2015; Ramel et al., 2009). For example, the herbicide 481 lactofen, targeting chlorophyll biosynthesis pathway and leading to oxidative stress, increased 482 the levels of defensive isoflavones in soybean (Landini et al., 2003). 483

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# 5.2.1.2. Phytophage responses to overcome plant defenses

485 Most phytophagous insects have the ability to cope with toxins secreted by plants, either 486 through sequestration or degradation (Heckel, 2014). Transcriptomic studies analyzing insect's 487 responses to pesticides allow understanding how pesticide exposure and the overcoming of

plant defenses interact. For example, in Sogatella furcifera (Hemiptera: Delphacidae), an LC15 488 of the insecticide imidacloprid induced an overexpression of several Cytochrome P450 489 monooxygenase genes from the CYP6 subfamily, as part of a pesticide degrading process (Yang 490 et al., 2018). As some of these CYP6 subfamily genes were previously identified in other insect 491 species to be involved in plant toxin detoxification (Rix et al., 2016; Schuler, 1996), pesticide 492 exposure may also allow insects to better cope with plant toxins. From an evolutionary point of 493 view, pesticide detoxication mechanisms observed in phytophages are thought to derive from 494 plant toxin detoxication mechanisms, which could explain the tight links between responses to 495 pesticides and plant toxins (Alyokhin and Chen, 2017). 496

This review underlined both antagonisms and synergisms between responses to pesticides and 497 responses to biotic interactions in plants and insects. However, due to the overlap between some 498 biotic and pesticide stress responses, and with the exception of specific plant metabolism 499 disruptors, it seems that pesticides induce chemical stress response pathways, which may 500 promote at least plant antibiosis and phytophage detoxification processes. Nevertheless, the 501 outcome of plant-insect interactions in this context remains unpredictable and largely 502 503 undescribed (Figure 1). It is thus crucial to focus more on the effects of pesticides at the scale of defense/counter-attack mechanisms to better understand how sublethal pesticide exposures 504 may reshape plant-phytophage interactions. 505

506

# 5.2.2. Phytophage defenses against natural enemies

507 Defense mechanisms of phytophagous insects against their natural enemies are slightly 508 different depending on the type of enemy. While defense against parasitoids mainly rely on 509 insect immunity, defense against predators generally mobilizes toxicity or escape strategies 510 (Greeney et al., 2012; Gross, 1993).

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In most phytophagous insect species, defense against parasitoids is feasible through two 511 512 different mechanisms depending on the type of parasitism. Immune cells within the hemolymph, called hemocytes, kill the eggs and larvae of endoparasitoids through nodulation 513 or encapsulation (Greeney et al., 2012; Salt, 1970) while defensive behaviors and molting allow 514 phytophages to get rid of the eggs and larvae of ectoparasitoids (Gross, 1993). To our 515 knowledge, no data has been published on the effects of pesticides on the nodulation or 516 encapsulation processes in phytophagous species. However, in non-phytophagous insects, 517 exposure to sublethal doses of insecticides usually reduces the encapsulation/nodulation 518 success (Delpuech et al., 1996; James and Xu, 2012). Furthermore, sublethal doses of toxic 519 520 plant extracts negatively affected nodulation against a pathogen in the phytophage Eurygaster integriceps (Heteroptera: Scutellaridae) (Zibaee and Bandani, 2010). More data are available 521 concerning molting, which is impaired by growth regulator insecticides (Jia et al., 2022; Meng 522 et al., 2020; W. Zhang et al., 2021). For example, expression of genes involved in ecdysis were 523 repressed by an LC<sub>10</sub> of the insecticide broflanilide the, which led to a decreased biosynthesis 524 of molting hormone and, eventually, to failed molting (Jia et al., 2022). While the impact of 525 such impairment on defense against ectoparasitoids was never assessed, failed molting is likely 526 to increase phytophage sensitivity to these natural enemies. 527

528 In aphids, several facultative endosymbionts are of particular importance in insect defense against various biotic stressors (Baumann, 2005; Engel and Moran, 2013). For example, the 529 bacteria Hamiltonella defensa protects the pea aphid Acyrthosiphon pisum (Hemiptera: 530 531 Aphididae) against its main parasitoid Aphidius ervi (Hymenoptera: Braconidae) (Oliver et al., 2003). This bacteria is also known to help aphids to cope with insecticides (Li et al., 2021). 532 Thus, despite endosymbiotic communities being deeply altered by pesticides (Shang et al., 533 2021; Zeng et al., 2020), it is likely that H. defensa populations are selected and maintained in 534 aphids under parasitoid pressure and pesticide contaminated environments. 535

The synthesis of secondary metabolites involved in defense against predators might also be affected by pesticides. For example, exposure of larvae of the leaf beetle *Phaedon cochleariae* (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) to sublethal doses of lambda-cyhalothrin led to an increased attraction of their ant predator *Myrmica rubra* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) to their secretions (Müller et al., 2019). The authors hypothesized that it may be due to a reduction in the synthesis of defensive repellent compounds within larval secretions.

Altogether, insect defenses, both against parasitoids and predators, seem to be reduced under exposure to sublethal doses of insecticides (Figure 1, Figure 3), yet the effects of other pesticides on this process remain unknown. Moreover, studies on the impact of pesticides on parasitoid virulence (i.e. ability to overcome hosts' defenses) are lacking in order to assess precisely their effects on phytophage-natural enemy interactions.

547

548 6. How sublethal doses of pesticides alter host nutritional quality and impact the upper
549 trophic levels

# 550 **6.1. Pesticide effects on plant nutritional quality and impacts on phytophages**

551 From the perspective of phytophagous insects, plant quality is mostly driven by soluble sugar and amino acid contents as well as their bigger counterparts (polysaccharides and proteins). A 552 high-quality plant is usually characterized by a high nitrogen content (i.e. high protein/amino-553 acid contents) and easily accessible carbon resources (i.e. soluble sugars or storage 554 polysaccharides such as starch). In addition, their contents in essential amino-acids to 555 phytophages (i.e. that they cannot synthesize; Brodbeck et al., 1987) also condition their quality 556 as host plants. High quality plants may thus attract more phytophages and therefore suffer more 557 558 damages than low quality plants (Awmack and Leather, 2002; Couture et al., 2010; Lindroth, 2010; Sarfraz et al., 2006). However, phytophages may also consume more plant material when 559 poor quality plants fail to provide adequate nutrients, which could be increased by a lower 560

ability of these plants to cope with phytophages' attack (Berner et al., 2005; Lindroth, 2010;
Lou and Baldwin, 2004). In this section we review how low doses of pesticides can induce
metabolic shifts and modify host quality, and how these changes may affect the upper trophic
levels.

Host plant quality can be altered by low doses of pesticides (Table S1; Tafoya-Razo et al.,
2019). Indeed, whether herbicides, insecticides and fungicides, pesticides induce profound
modifications of plant physiology, alter their metabolism, and activate stress responses (Serra
et al., 2015; Sulmon et al., 2015).

569 Firstly, plant quality is strongly affected by herbicides disrupting amino-acid biosynthesis. Sublethal doses of glyphosate thus disturb the synthesis of aromatic amino acids in plants 570 (through inhibition of the shikimate pathway), which can consequently alter the acquisition of 571 essential amino acids by phytophages such as phenylalanine, tryptophan and tyrosine (Antonio 572 Carbonari et al., 2014; Brodbeck et al., 1987; Serra et al., 2015, 2013; Vivancos et al., 2011). 573 However, these effects seem to depend on the considered species and timing of exposure. For 574 example, a sublethal dose of glyphosate (10 times below field rates) induced a short-term 575 increase of phenylalanine and tyrosine contents in sugarcane plants (Saccharum officinarum : 576 577 Poaceae), followed by a decrease of these shikimate derivatives after seven days (Antonio Carbonari et al., 2014). In contrast, after seven days, similar glyphosate exposures strongly 578 579 increased tryptophan contents, another shikimate derivative, in *Cyperus rotundus* (Cyperaceae) 580 (Wang, 2001). Contents in other non-aromatic essential amino-acids also increased in response to glyphosate (Vivancos et al., 2011). 581

Some herbicides do not directly target amino acid biosynthesis pathways but inhibit key steps
of primary metabolism, such as photosynthesis and fatty acid biosynthesis, with consequences
on metabolite contents (Nemat Alla et al., 2008; Singh et al., 1972; Tafoya-Razo et al., 2019).
For example, herbicides inhibiting acetyl-coA carboxylase were found to deeply alter plant

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586 metabolite contents, even at doses 10,000 times below the recommended field rate (Tafoya-Razo et al., 2019). More generally, sublethal rates of these herbicides increase soluble amino-587 acid contents (Hjorth et al., 2006; Nemat Alla et al., 2008; Singh et al., 1972). Some essential 588 amino-acids (i.e. valine, leucine, isoleucine) were however found less abundant in chlorimuron-589 ethyl treated wheat and maize shoots, underlining the occurrence of herbicide-specific patterns 590 (Nemat Alla et al., 2008). Finally, sublethal levels of dicamba decreased plant global nitrogen 591 contents while, as an auxin analog, this herbicide does not specifically target metabolic 592 processes (Bohnenblust et al., 2013). 593

Pesticides other than herbicides can also affect plant quality in a subtler way. For example, 594 sublethal doses of the fungicide tebuconazole, equivalent to levels found in peri-agricultural 595 systems, modified metabolic profiles of plant leaves and roots, especially sugar and amino-acid 596 contents but also led to an accumulation of anti-oxidants (Serra et al., 2015, 2013). Insecticides 597 also alter plant metabolism through non-target effects, leading in some cases to increases in 598 amino-acid contents (Cesco et al., 2021; Mahdavi et al., 2015; Nemat Alla et al., 2008). For 599 600 example, field rates of the insecticide diazinon, while being totally non-lethal to plants, induced shifts in sugar and amino-acid contents but also increased phenylpropanoid contents (secondary 601 metabolites involved in stress response) (Mahdavi et al., 2015). 602

Plant quality is strongly driven by plant interactions with micro-organisms, and especially 603 symbionts (Babalola, 2010; Igiehon and Babalola, 2017; Turan et al., 2014). The effects of 604 605 pesticides on plant-interacting micro-organisms, such as mycorrhizae and beneficial rhizobacteria, have been extensively studied and reviewed (Aloo et al., 2021; Chowdhury et al., 606 2008; Hage-Ahmed et al., 2019; Hussain et al., 2009). There is no particular tendency towards 607 beneficial or deleterious effects on mycorrhizae and there is a strong variation depending on 608 the type of molecule, dose and soil characteristics (Hage-Ahmed et al., 2019). However, 609 reviews concerning soil bacterial communities and especially beneficial bacteria underline clear 610

detrimental effects of pesticides and their degradation byproducts (Aloo et al., 2021; Chowdhury et al., 2008; Hussain et al., 2009), such as the inhibition of nitrogen fixation and phosphorus solubilization, which are essential metabolic processes in plant nutrient uptake (Das and Debnath, 2006; Das et al., 2016; Fox et al., 2007; Sannino and Gianfreda, 2001). Such effects on bacteria, alongside with the detrimental effects of pesticides on mycorrhizae, could have drastic consequences on plant quality and therefore on trophic networks they support.

Altogether, sublethal doses of pesticides induce shifts in amino-acid and sugar contents in plants. While these changes generally seem to increase plant quality, predicting a detrimental or beneficial outcome for phytophagous insects is challenging (Figure 2). Indeed, most pesticides induce accumulation of secondary metabolites involved in generic stress responses, such as phenylpropanoids and antioxidants (Mahdavi et al., 2016; Serra et al., 2015, 2013), which is likely to be stressful to insects and could therefore compensate beneficial shifts in primary metabolite contents (Ramaroson et al., 2022).

While metabolic studies on the effects of low doses of insecticides on plant-insect interactions 624 are still lacking, previously mentioned plant metabolic changes due to sublethal doses of 625 herbicides could explain detrimental developmental effects in phytophagous insects. For 626 instance, the caterpillar Mamestra brassicae (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) had a slower 627 development when feeding on exposed Ranunculus acris (Ranunculaceae) plants with 628 sulfonylurea at 10% of the recommended field rate (Hahn et al., 2014). Moreover, Gastrophysa 629 630 polygoni (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) larvae feeding on chlorsulfuron-treated Fallopia convolvulus (Polygonaceae) displayed lower survival rates (Kjaer and Heimbach, 2001). 631 632 However, such bottom-up effects of herbicides highly depend on the considered species and molecule, and could involve, in addition to a decrease in plant nutritional value, the induction 633 of plant defenses, leading to either toxicity and/or repellence towards phytophages (Figure 1, 634 635 see sections 4.1 and 5.2.1).

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**Figure 2:** Main effects of sublethal doses of pesticides on the quality of plants, phytophages and related secondary food sources and potential cascading effects on natural enemies. Pesticide-induced changes in nutritional quality (inserts with arrow/question mark pictograms) and their potential effect on the upper trophic level (blue arrows) as well as pesticide contamination routes (red lines) are summarized here. Flat-head arrows indicate an overall negative effect on the upper trophic level, while point-head arrows indicate an overall positive effect. Dashed white arrows indicate a lack of knowledge on the effects of quality changes.

644

# 645 6.2. Effects of pesticides on natural enemies through their effect on plant and 646 phytophage quality

Overall, stress alter plant quality which results in a shift in phytophage fitness, which can either increase or decrease (see section 6.1). Moreover, plant quality conditions the quality of phytophage excretion products that can be consumed by natural enemies as secondary food sources (Crafts-Brandner, 2002). Some natural enemies also feed on plant resources such as nectar and pollen, which quality is linked to general plant quality (Pirotte et al., 2018; Silva et al., 2011). Therefore, low doses of pesticides are likely to affect the fitness of natural enemies through various bottom-up effects (Calvo-Agudo et al., 2022; Stapel et al., 2000).

Absence of toxicity is a major part of plant and phytophage quality, as primary and/or secondary 654 food sources for natural enemies. Exposure to pesticides, either direct or through the resource, 655 generally leads to pesticide contamination of tissues and products of plants and phytophagous 656 insects, that can decrease the fitness of natural enemies (Figure 2). For example, spraying aphids 657 658 with a combination of thiacloprid and deltamethrin insecticides at sublethal rates (lethal concentration of 10%) led to a significant decrease in population growth rates and parasitism 659 rates in the parasitoid Aphidius flaviventris (Hemiptera: Aphididae) (Majidpour et al., 2020). 660 661 Similar results were observed in predatory arthropods feeding on contaminated prey, with effects ranging from behavioral changes to fitness decreases (Schneider et al., 2009; Singh et 662 al., 2004; Wanumen et al., 2016; Yao, 2015). Other studies remain nonetheless necessary, 663 especially on the non-target effects of herbicides and fungicides, known to be deleterious to 664 various natural enemies through direct exposure (Yokoyama and Pritchard, 1984; Youn et al., 665 2003). 666

Honeydew and feces produced by phytophagous insects, together with plant nectar, are
important food subsidies for many natural enemies (Araj et al., 2011; Rahat et al., 2005; Tena
et al., 2013; Wäckers et al., 2008). Exposure to herbicides can decrease and delay flowering,

even when used at less than 5% of field rate, therefore reducing the availability of floral nectar 670 for natural enemies. Nevertheless, chronic exposure to sublethal doses of herbicides such as 671 glyphosate induced an increase in soluble sugar contents in the floral nectar of several wild 672 plants, meaning that the quality of plant nectar may increase after pesticide exposure (Russo et 673 al., 2022). In addition, the nutritive quality and amount of honeydew and feces excreted by 674 phytophages usually correlates positively with plant quality (Fischer et al., 2005; Fischer and 675 Shingleton, 2001; Whitaker et al., 2014). This means that an increase in plant quality in 676 response to sublethal doses of herbicides (see section 6.1) could lead to an increase in honeydew 677 and feces quality for natural enemies. However, He et al. (2013) and Chen et al. (2017) showed 678 679 that exposure of hemipteran phytophages to sublethal doses of insecticides such as imidacloprid, bifenthrin and flupyradifurone led to a decrease in honeydew production. 680 Therefore, despite a potential increase in quality, pesticide exposure of plant-phytophage 681 682 systems may reduce secondary food source availability for parasitoids and consequently decrease their fitness (Damien et al., 2020, 2019). 683

Food subsidies can also represent an additional source of toxicity for natural enemies. Indeed, 684 soil application of pesticides leads to a significant contamination of plant nectar (Botías et al., 685 2015; Cowles and Eitzer, 2017; Stoner and Eitzer, 2012), and is often shown to impair natural 686 enemies, both in plant-natural enemy systems (Stapel et al., 2000) and in simulated interaction 687 systems (i.e. feeding natural enemies with contaminated sucrose solution; Gao et al., 2021). For 688 example, the treatment of cotton plants with different systemic insecticides led to disturbed 689 690 foraging ability and reduced lifespan in the parasitoid *Microplitis croceipes* (Hymenoptera: Braconidae) after it fed on contaminated extrafloral nectar (Stapel et al., 2000). Moreover, 691 692 quantifiable levels of neonicotinoids were present in the honeydew of the mealybug Planococcus citri (Hemiptera: Pseudococcidae) following rearing on plants either exposed 693 through spraying or soil application (Calvo-Agudo et al., 2019; Quesada et al., 2020). This 694

honeydew contamination led to high mortality rates of parasitic wasps feeding on it (CalvoAgudo et al., 2019). Despite those studies were conducted using field application rates, it is
likely that honeydew remains a source of exposure to residual levels of pesticides for non-target
beneficial insects, even in non-crop systems (Calvo-Agudo et al., 2022).

In summary, pesticides induce changes in plant metabolism and, while these changes depend 699 on plant species, pesticides and doses, they can still affect upper trophic levels. Whereas the 700 701 observed shifts in plant nutritive metabolite contents suggest an increase in plant quality for phytophages, the associated increase in secondary metabolites and plant defenses may counter 702 this benefit (Figure 2). Concerning natural enemies, pesticide exposure of plants can lead to an 703 704 increase in the quality of food subsidies (i.e. nectar, honeydew and feces), but also a decrease in their availability. Moreover, it is clear that the consumption of host/prey contaminated with 705 pesticides, but also of contaminated food subsidies, leads to deleterious effects on natural 706 enemies (Figure 3). 707

# 708 7. A short note on sublethal pesticide effects at the population scale, with potential

# 709 impact on trophic networks

The different impacts of pesticides on plants previously reviewed are likely to affect plant 710 711 populations and especially plant density and plant community structure, which, in plantphytophage interactions, usually define the carrying capacity of insect populations (Friess et 712 al., 2017). Moreover, the impact of phytophagy on plants depends on the capacity of the 713 phytophage to access food sources (location, choice, feeding behavior and resistance to plant 714 defense), but also on the density of phytophages. Pesticides are designed to kill and therefore 715 reduce population density. However, sublethal exposures have more complex and context-716 717 dependent effects on populations as they can either be deleterious, neutral or induce hormesis. Hormesis consists in the biphasic response that some organisms display after exposure to stress, 718 pesticides in our case, and that is characterized by a stimulation of the trait under sublethal 719 doses, and an inhibition at higher doses. (Calabrese, 2018; Cutler et al., 2022; Guedes, 2022). 720 Since these aspects of sublethal pesticide exposure have been extensively studied and reviewed, 721 722 we will only quickly summarize them here.

Sublethal doses of pesticides, mostly herbicides, are known to negatively affect plant population 723 724 features, such as flowering intensity, seed production and seed quality, or even the efficiency 725 of asexual reproduction (Albrecht et al., 2014; Andersson, 1996; Boutin et al., 2004; Egan et al., 2014; Melton et al., 1988; Pokhrel and Karsai, 2015; Riemens et al., 2009; Schmitz et al., 726 2013). This generally leads to the decline in plant abundance observed in field studies 727 investigating herbicide drift (Egan et al., 2014; Johnson et al., 2023; Schmitz et al., 2013). While 728 hormetic effects have been observed frequently on plant growth, very few studies to this date 729 showed that sublethal rates of pesticides could increase plant reproduction and therefore 730 abundances (Pokhrel and Karsai, 2015). 731

In phytophages, sublethal pesticide exposure leads to a wide range of responses when it comes 732 to fitness traits such as fecundity, longevity, development time and birth rate, which all 733 modulate population size. While several studies underlined deleterious effects of pesticides on 734 insect pests' fitness traits (Table S1, Deng et al., 2019; Lashkari et al., 2007; Lutz et al., 2018; 735 Mahmoodi et al., 2020; Saska et al., 2016), several studies reported hormetic effects of sublethal 736 doses of pesticides, mostly insecticides (Table S1, Chelliah et al., 1980; Morse and Zareh, 1991; 737 Christopher Cutler et al., 2005; Yu et al., 2010; Cho et al., 2011; Cordeiro et al., 2013; Ayyanath 738 et al., 2015; Tang et al., 2015; Lu et al., 2016; Rix et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2017; Cao et al., 739 2019; Deng et al., 2019; Ullah et al., 2020). Very few studies focused on non-target effects of 740 741 pesticides on the fitness of phytophages and, while they seem usually deleterious (Bohnenblust et al., 2013; Clements et al., 2018; Saska et al., 2016), further work is required to know if these 742 effects are consistent. 743

Population features of natural enemies are negatively affected by pesticides, even at low doses 744 through direct exposure or through the consumption of contaminated host/prey (Table S1, 745 746 Yokoyama and Pritchard, 1984; Schneider et al., 2009; Rahmani and Bandani, 2013; Abedi et al., 2014; Maia et al., 2016; de Morais et al., 2016; Majidpour et al., 2020; Ricupero et al., 747 2020). Cases of hormetic effects of sublethal doses of pesticides, mostly non-target, were often 748 reported on natural enemies (Basana Gowda et al., 2021; Hou et al., 2023; Leite et al., 2015; 749 Pratissoli et al., 2010; Ray et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). These short-term effects range from 750 increased longevity and fecundity to higher parasitism and emergence rates, without 751 demonstrated positive impact on their population growth rate and survival over generations. 752

In summary, pesticide effects on land plants and insects go far beyond effects at the scale of the organism. Fitness traits are negatively affected by sublethal doses of pesticides in most organisms whether or not they are targeted by the molecule, leading to populations' declines. However, some organisms, mostly phytophages and natural enemies to a lesser extent,

displayed an increase of their fitness in response to sublethal rates of pesticides, due to hormetic
mechanisms. This phenomenon, alongside with the fact that species display different tolerance
levels to pesticides, may have consequences on species dominance and abundance and therefore
disturb plant and arthropod communities.

**Figure 3:** (**A**) Summary of sublethal effects of pesticides on traits involved in interactions (grey arrows associated to their pictograms) between land plants (bottom), phytophages (middle) and natural enemies (top). Effects are synthesized by blue arrows/question mark pictograms and are detailed in the associated table (**B**). Each effect can be linked to the scheme and the corresponding traits thanks to circled blue digits. Capital letters between brackets refer to the type of pesticide concerned (H=Herbicide, I=Insecticide, F=Fungicide)

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Artukat tetetintis	Effect(s) observed on Effect(s) observed on phytophagous insects natural enemies	Deacrease in size, increase in Increased development development time time, reduced biomass (slight hormetic increases (H,I,F) also observed) (I)	Decrease or Increase in various population features (Fecundity, Lifespan, Intrinsic rate of increase) depending intrinsic rate of increase) on the dose (Hormetic on the dose (Hormetic (H,I) (H,I)	×	Potential color and cuticle structure modification X (I)	Decrease of pheromone X emission X (1)	Impairment of responses to X Kairomones and Volatiles (I)	Impairemnts of the immune response, potential increase of defensive bacteria in X aphids (1)	Decrease in feeding Decrease in predation and Decrease in feeding mobility for predators behaviors and feeding Decrease in foraging intentsity behaviors and oviposition rates for parasitoids
ATURAL ENENTS       ATURAL ENENTS       Each anternation of the second an	Effect(s) observed on plants	Deacrease in biomass, more consistent concerning roots (increase observed once under F) (H, I, F)	Decrease in seed production, seed quality and asexual reproduction (H)	Increase in essential Amino- acid contents, Metabolic reshuffle Decrease in nitrogen content (H,J)	Color modification through changes in pigment contents (less chlorophyll mostly) Architectural modifications (H,J,F)	Modification of the emitted VOC spectrum with both decrease and increase in the emitted amount reported (H)	×	Activation of defense genes and increase in phytohormones involved in defense Higher attraction of natural (H.J,F)	×
ANURAL ENERNIES	3 Trait affected	<b>1</b> Size and development	Population features	Nutritional quality and metabolism	(Visual / contact cues	S Olfactory cues	Cue perception	Defense mechanisms	Attack mechanisms
				PHYTOPHAGES				Decrease Attack mechanisms O Visual cues Increase Defense mechanisms M Olfactory cues	Reshuffle 🖉 Cue perception

768 8. Conclusions and recommendations

# 769 **8.1. Conclusions**

770 Throughout this review, we highlighted that sublethal doses of pesticides induce a wide diversity of effects, mostly deleterious, on land plants and arthropods and on their interactions. 771 772 Even at sublethal doses, pesticides disturb direct interaction mechanisms and behaviors (i.e. host/prey recognition, attack/defense; Figure 1, 3), as well as matter fluxes within trophic 773 774 networks (Figure 2, 3). They decrease fitness and population size of interacting organisms and may further contribute to biodiversity losses in agricultural landscapes (Figure 3). Pesticide 775 776 effects highly depend on the considered molecule, with target effects being usually more deleterious (Figure 4). However, because non-target effects have received less attention, 777 especially concerning phytophages, it is hard to assess their impact on trophic networks, (Figure 778 4, Table S1). Finally, this review showed that interactions between pesticide effects observed 779 at each trophic level remain unknown and seem hardly predictable in terms of compensation, 780 781 additivity or antagonisms. For example, the outcome of sublethal pesticide exposures increasing both phytophage reproduction (thus phytophagy pressure on plants) and plant defenses against 782 phytophages remains to be described (Figure 4). 783

784 Sublethal rates of pesticides are likely to strongly disturb PPNe terrestrial trophic systems, and especially impair natural enemies (Figure 3, 4). A decrease in the effectiveness of phytophage 785 control by natural enemies, even at low doses, could thus represent a significant cause of pest 786 outbreaks, in addition to pesticide adaptations (resistance or tolerance). Therefore, while 787 pesticides are currently the predominant mean for controlling pests in the short term (Clapp, 788 789 2021; Popp et al., 2013), their effects on adjacent systems may have considerable feedback impacts on agricultural production in the longer run (Dutcher, 2007; Mironidis et al., 2013; 790 Schmidt et al., 2004). Moreover, these results question recent pest management strategies 791 aiming at developing insecticides compatible with biocontrol (i.e. affecting pests but not 792

parasitoids; Torres and Bueno, 2018). Indeed, in addition to potential cryptic negative effects of such compounds on natural enemies, this review showed that pesticide effects were more generic and involved not only insecticides but also herbicides and fungicides. These two latter categories of pesticides also act as non-target and may impair biocontrol services.



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Figure 4: Sankey diagram summarizing the publications assessing sublethal effects of 798 pesticides on plants, phytophages and natural enemies (191 publications listed in Table S1). 799 When studies investigated different traits, different trophic levels or different types of 800 801 pesticides, they were counted once for each, reaching a total of 222 occurrences. From left to right, publications are distributed across the type of pesticide (Target: n=183 or Non-target: 802 n=39), the studied organism (Plant: n=74; Phytophage: n=68; Natural enemy: n=80), and the 803 type of trait studied (Reproduction: n=72; Pop. = Population metrics: n=12; Physiology: n=34; 804 Development: n=46; Attack/Defense: n=58). Path color roughly represents the effect, in terms 805

806 of decrease, increase, or unclear variation, of sublethal pesticide exposure on the considered807 trait.

808 8.2. Recommendations

809 As seen throughout this review, dose strongly influences the effects of pesticides on organisms, ranging from strong deleterious effects at sublethal yet high doses, to cryptic (e.g., metabolic 810 811 shifts) or increases in their fitness generally occurring at low sublethal or non-lethal doses. While high sublethal doses (i.e. LC<sub>20-30</sub>) are quite well studied in the current literature, there is 812 a lessened interest for lower doses (Table S1). It is therefore essential to consider a wider range 813 of doses when studying sublethal effects of target and non-target pesticides on organisms, in 814 order to investigate the complete range of responses organisms can display and to identify 815 unexpected effects. Furthermore, while pesticide responses have frequently been undertaken at 816 817 various scales (i.e. gene expression, metabolomics, macroscopic traits, and population features) in plants, insects deserve more attention to offer deeper insights into sublethal effects of 818 pesticides, especially cryptic ones (Figure 4). 819

820 A major challenge when reviewing sublethal pesticide effects on terrestrial organisms is the exposure method, which strongly differs between studied organisms (Figure S1). Natural 821 822 enemies are generally exposed through direct application or by being reared on contaminated artificial surfaces, while phytophages are more generally exposed by being reared on 823 contaminated plants and, for some studies, through an artificial food source (Figure S1). For 824 825 plants, direct application is also the main exposure method (Figure S1). While direct application allows to control the dose of exposure, it lacks ecological relevance. Indeed, sublethal pesticide 826 827 exposures mostly happen in peri-agricultural systems, where pesticides are located in the soil and in the atmosphere due to leaching and drift and then in PPNes due to trophic transfer. 828 Therefore, soil and aerial exposures for plants as well as through the food chain for phytophages 829 830 and natural enemies appear more relevant to understand how pesticides can affect trophic

interactions. To fill the knowledge gap on the real and precise dose to which organisms are
exposed *in vivo*, quantifications of pesticides and of their degradation products in the organism
tissues need to be carried out and linked to the observed effects.

834 Another aspect lacking consideration when studying the sublethal effects of pesticides in the scope of trophic interactions or biocontrol, is that animals and plants are holobionts (Engel and 835 Moran, 2013; Vandenkoornhuyse et al., 2015). Symbionts strongly drive indeed both PPNe 836 trophic interactions and responses to pesticides (Frago et al., 2012; Hackett et al., 2013; Kikuchi 837 et al., 2012; Oliver et al., 2012). Many studies focused on how bacterial and fungal symbionts 838 may help plants and arthropods to cope with pesticides, but the consequences on processes such 839 as metabolism and defense mechanisms remain uninvestigated, as the impacts on bottom-up / 840 top-down species interactions (Kikuchi et al., 2012; Ramya et al., 2016). Therefore, future 841 research on sublethal pesticide effects needs to broaden the range of considered species 842 interactions, including microorganisms. 843

This review highlighted that focusing on the responses of single organisms to single molecules, 844 led to a current incapacity to understand how pesticides really disrupt ecosystem functioning, 845 especially through their impact on biotic/trophic interactions (Calow and Forbes, 2003; Relyea 846 847 and Hoverman, 2006). Our understanding of the impact of sublethal exposure to pesticides, both target and non-target, on trophic networks therefore remain superficial, both from an 848 ecological and evolutionary point of view. Works on sublethal pesticide effects now need to be 849 850 focused on biotic/trophic interactions within PPNe systems to acquire experimental and field data, and understand how biotic interactions are shaped by the expression of traits under 851 pesticide exposure. Moreover, associating these works to modeling approaches could allow 852 testing and improving current models in order to develop better prediction for pesticide risk 853 assessment. Finally, sublethal pesticide effects on PPNe systems and biocontrol services now 854 need to be considered at the landscape scale. Pesticide contaminations resulting from 855

conventional agriculture may indeed strongly impact biocontrol efficiency of organic farming
systems together with the functioning of trophic networks unexploited by humans, also hosting
beneficial organisms for many other ecosystem services: water quality, carbon and nitrogen
recycling, pollination, etc. (Bloom et al., 2021; Knapp et al., 2023; Ricci et al., 2019).

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# 869 Author contributions

- 870 Axel Beringue: Investigation, Writing Original Draft, Visualization Joséphine Queffelec:
- 871 Writing Review & Editing Cécile Le Lann: Conceptualization, Writing Review & Editing,
- 872 Supervision Cécile Sulmon: Conceptualization, Writing Review & Editing, Supervision

# 873 Figure legends

874 Figure 1: Main effects of sublethal doses of pesticides on host/prey recognition mechanisms and attack/defense mechanisms in land plants, phytophages and natural enemies. While grey 875 arrows represent interactions within PPNe networks, blue arrows represent the effects of 876 877 sublethal doses of pesticides on traits involved in those interactions. Flat-head arrows indicate an overall decrease of the trait, while point-head arrows indicate an increase. Dashed white 878 arrows indicate a lack of knowledge on the effects. The effects of pesticides on each trait, 879 represented by the different pictograms, are indicated in the associated inserts, with (+), (-) and 880 (?) depending on the effect (increase, decrease, no known effect respectively). 881

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**Figure 2:** Main effects of sublethal doses of pesticides on the quality of plants, phytophages and related secondary food sources and potential cascading effects on natural enemies. Pesticide-induced changes in nutritional quality (inserts with arrow/question mark pictograms) and their potential effect on the upper trophic level (blue arrows) as well as pesticide contamination routes (red lines) are summarized here. Flat-head arrows indicate an overall negative effect on the upper trophic level, while point-head arrows indicate an overall positive effect. Dashed white arrows indicate a lack of knowledge on the effects of quality changes.

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**Figure 3:** (**A**) Summary of sublethal effects of pesticides on traits involved in interactions (grey arrows associated to their pictograms) between land plants (bottom), phytophages (middle) and natural enemies (top). Effects are synthesized by blue arrows/question mark pictograms and are detailed in the associated table (**B**). Each effect can be linked to the scheme and the corresponding traits thanks to circled blue digits. Capital letters between brackets refer to the type of pesticide concerned (H=Herbicide, I=Insecticide, F=Fungicide)

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Figure 4: Sankey diagram summarizing the publications assessing sublethal effects of 898 pesticides on plants, phytophages and natural enemies (191 publications listed in Table S1). 899 When studies investigated different traits, different trophic levels or different types of 900 pesticides, they were counted once for each, reaching a total of 222 occurrences. From left to 901 right, publications are distributed across the type of pesticide (Target: n=183 or Non-target: 902 n=39), the studied organism (Plant: n=74; Phytophage: n=68; Natural enemy: n=80), and the 903 type of trait studied (Reproduction: n=72; Pop. = Population metrics: n=12; Physiology: n=34; 904 Development: n=46; Attack/Defense: n=58). Path color roughly represents the effect, in terms 905 of decrease, increase, or unclear variation, of sublethal pesticide exposure on the considered 906 907 trait.

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1809	1645–1656. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10886-005-5804-1
1810	Zibaee, A., Bandani, A.R., 2010. Effects of Artemisia annua L. (Asteracea) on the digestive enzymatic
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1812	(Heteroptera: Scutellaridae), against Beauveria bassiana. Bull. Entomol. Res. 185–196.
1813	

# **1814** Supplementary Materials

Table S1: Summary of publications relevant in the scope of trophic interactions that assess the effects of pesticides on terrestrial organisms (publications cited in this table are all listed in the Bibliography section of the manuscript) with detailed information on the species studied, the pesticide(s) tested, alongside with its effect and its effect dose, the way the organisms were exposed and a brief summary of the observed effects. While two organisms are studied but tested separately thus not in interaction, the "Number of interacting trophic networks" generally indicates 1

Figure S1: Proportion in the current literature (191 publications listed in Table S1) of the different types of exposure routes to pesticides for the three types of organisms considered in this review. Color gradient roughly represents the ecological relevance of the exposure route, yellow shades corresponding to methods closer to contaminations occurring within terrestrial non-target trophic networks.



# **Declaration of interests**

☑ The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

□ The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests:

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