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LETTERS

Pesticide debate should be based on science

Re: "Ban on pesticides would be a winner," The Daily News, July 30, 2011.

Dr. Warren Bell talks about the great health benefits from Ontario's ban but he neglects to mention what those are. He also mentions that lower levels of pesticides are being detected in some streams, but Bell forgot to tell readers that the levels detected before the ban were almost undetectable to begin with. It seems that Bell needs to take another look at what the cosmetic pesticide ban has done in Ontario before suggesting that's the right path for British Columbia and making false claims aimed at scaring readers.

Aside from increasing insect and weed infestations, there are other negative consequences that are starting to show, including illegal pesticide use, loss of green space, increased municipal maintenance costs, and homeowner frustration.

When it comes to Quebec, Bell seems to have missed the Quebec government's recent declaration that "products containing 2,4-D do not pose an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment," otherwise he wouldn't have made such blatantly false claims.

What readers should know is that before any pesticide can be sold in Canada it must undergo a comprehensive scientific review and risk assessment by Health Canada. This means that in addition to over 200 scientific studies covering health and environmental effects, Health Canada examines all studies and makes a decision based on all of the scientific evidence available.

Through this process pesticides receive a greater breadth of scrutiny than any other regulated product and only those products that meet Health Canada's strict health and safety standards are registered for sale and use.

Bell praises the Ontario approach yet in his column he suggests an additional restriction of removing the exemption for golf courses. This just goes to show that Bell and numerous other activist groups will continue to want more products banned, for more uses and this is just the thin edge of a wedge that leads to bans where the repercussions are more threatening to our overall health and well-being by denying people access to safe living conditions and an abundant supply of healthy food.

The divisive debates about pesticide bans will continue as long as municipalities and provinces continue to arbitrarily ban products that have been approved for use by Health Canada. The uncertainty created by these various levels of government mean that new products will not be brought forward for approval and the public will have fewer and fewer options for controlling the numerous insect and weed infestations affecting their properties.

It's high time that science-based decisions be re-introduced into the pesticides debate.

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Editor's note: *CropLife Canada is a trade association representing manufacturers, developers and*

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