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OPINION LETTERS

Stop blaming pesticides for decreasing bee population

Thursday, July 11, 2013 8:53:11 EDT AM



(REUTERS)

Sir: The complexity of the issues facing bee health is, unfortunately, too frequently being overlooked in favour of an unjustifiable focus on pesticides. International researchers widely agree that bee health is impacted by a combination of factors, the primary one being the Varroa mite.

Banning neonicotinoids is not the answer. There is overwhelming scientific evidence demonstrating that neonicotinoid residues are not a significant factor in overall bee health decline. That is why, rather than focusing only on one factor, we should be taking a holistic approach to solving this important problem.

In western Canada, more than 20 million acres of canola, the majority of which is treated with a neonicotinoid, is planted and bee health remains strong. If we look at the rest of the world, certain regions that do not use neonicotinoids are experiencing major bee losses while others that make widespread use of these tools have healthy, thriving bee populations. Clearly, there is no reason, then, to draw the conclusion that neonicotinoids are solely to blame for the losses of Ontario beekeepers.

Neonicotinoid seed treatments offer significant advantages; they are applied directly to the seed, thus limiting any exposure to non-target organisms while providing valuable protection to the crop. Neonicotinoids currently on the market have been thoroughly assessed by Health Canada to ensure they can be used safely without harming bees.

Canada should not follow the lead of Europe by proposing a knee-jerk ban on neonicotinoids. After all, Europe's current policies have put it the position of being the world's largest food importer. Let's instead work collaboratively together to find meaningful, long-term solutions to bee health challenges that will ensure a productive and sustainable agricultural system.

Lorne Hepworth

President, CropLife Canada

College calling for public lobbying for funding

Sir: Lambton College has served Sarnia-Lambton for the past 46 years. From humble beginnings in an old school at Bluewaterland, to the main campus on London Road constructed in 1971, the College has grown to its current enrolment of over 3600 full-time students.

Lambton College has a storied history in health education. From initial enrolment of 50 nursing students in the late 1960s, the College currently serves almost 1000 Health Science students each year. This growth is evidence of the proactive response by the College to the rapidly evolving roles of healthcare professionals. The School of Health Science has become a cornerstone of the College's academic mandate and a vital component of the health human resource infrastructure within our community.

Lambton College's health programs are grounded in academic excellence, reflected in consistently high rate of graduate success. The College has been ingenious in developing new health programs and expanding enrolment within the confines of a facility not purpose-built to current and future demands. Advances in the educational integration of simulation, inter-professional practice and research require a modern facility to respond to the rapidly changing health education landscape.

The provincial government clearly recognizes the necessity to provide state-of-the-art health education facilities as evidenced by the many, stunning new buildings that have been constructed at college campuses across Ontario over the past decade. Lambton College has sought government funding for a similar new facility on a number of occasions, without success. As a rural region, Sarnia-Lambton face challenges related to health human resources unique from larger, urban Ontario communities, and yet our area has been denied access to financial support from the provincial government.

Lambton College is committed to continue to be an integral partner in the local healthcare delivery system. For our local health education infrastructure to flourish, investment in a new Health and Science Centre is paramount. This is a call to action, to mobilize our community to elicit government support for funding of this important project. Our community must advocate with politicians at all levels of government to fund investment in health education in Sarnia-Lambton. Lambton College students deserve a state-of-the-art learning environment as has been provided to students in numerous other Southwestern Ontario communities.

John Girard

Chair, Lambton College Board of Governors

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Norah G Fon · a few seconds ago

A Neonicotinoid Insecticide Ban Is NEXT ! And this time, it will be arbitrarily imposed against the hated Agriculture and Golf Industries. <http://wp.me/P1jq40-2Mt> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-4FC> This anti-pesticide prohibition will begin to inflict destruction upon these industries, just as it did against the professional lawn care industry. <http://wp.me/P1jq40-43B> Anti-pesticide government officials and bee-keepers are merely looking for so-called experts WHO AGREE WITH THEM as

