

# Ban neonicotinoid pesticides as a precaution

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By John Bennett

In a Nov. 1 column, "The truth about bee mortality, insecticides and corn planting in Ontario," Guelph-area corn farmer Terry Daynard, a former associate dean for research and innovation at the Ontario Agricultural College at the University of Guelph, wrote how some beekeeping and environmental groups want to ban the use of neonicotinoid insecticides.

The impact of neonicotinoids on bees is very well documented, as are the reported losses by Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba beekeepers.

Sierra Club Canada, the Ontario Beekeepers' Association, dozens of other organizations in North America and the European Union support a ban on neonicotinoid pesticides.

We have taken this position based on scientific evidence rather than self-interest. The European Union announced its ban after several years of research and debate. We have asked the Canadian government to take similar action as a precautionary measure.

In September, Health Canada's pest management regulatory agency stated on its website that the agency "has determined that current agricultural practices related to the use of neonicotinoid-treated corn and soybean seed are affecting the environment due to their impacts on bees and other pollinators."

We have never used the alarmist term "Armageddon." We choose our words carefully and expect others to do the same.

Bees and other insect pollinators are essential in the production of 30 to 35 per cent of the food on our plates. They are a vital part of a multibillion-dollar industry. Protecting them make sense, for today and the future.

Many of Daynard's comments are consistent with statements from the pesticide industry, but we were surprised he repeated them because most of them have been refuted by many scientific studies done in Canada, the United States and Europe.

Let's take corn pollen for example.

Daynard denied neonicotinoids in pollen have any effect. But Prof. Christian Krupke of Purdue University, during an August session of the Ontario bee health working group, where a representative of the Ontario Grain Growers Association was in attendance, presented his findings that bees harvest corn pollen and it contains detectable levels of neonicotinoids.

Daynard's statement that the levels of neonicotinoid in corn pollen are too low to affect bees has no scientific basis. Scientists are still working on this.

Neonicotinoids have been around for only a decade or so. However, in this short time they have become incredibly pervasive. Every corn and soy seed planted is coated with them. That's a million bags of corn seed in Ontario. Only a small proportion of the pesticide is actually absorbed by the plant, the rest is released in the air, soil and water. Last year, the Quebec government tested 16 rivers and found neonicotinoid pesticides in all of them.

Neonicotinoids are used whether or not pests are present. So it would seem they are vital to production, but Ontario farmers have been producing corn and soybeans for generations without neonicotinoids. Estimates vary on the effect of banning them from use on corn, but even the highest predicted loss of production would not put any corn producers out of business.

Beekeepers, on the other hand, have incurred tremendous losses and some are losing their farms and livelihoods. Daynard's numbers do not demonstrate a healthy bee industry. They show the willingness of beekeepers to keep investing in new hives every year in order to stay in business.

Rather than digging in, we would rather see Daynard join us in seeking solutions. Misinformation is not the answer.

John Bennett is the executive director of Sierra Club Canada in Ottawa.

## **NORAHG RESPONSE**

### **ONTARIO INSPECTORS & SPECIALISTS MUST INVESTIGATE WHETHER BEE-KEEPERS ARE DELIBERATELY KILLING THEIR OWN BEES**

Bee-keepers are **ABSOLUTELY WRONG** about bee mortalities ! Their allegations are so ridiculous that observers are beginning to speculate that bee-keepers deliberately killed their bees in order to lay false blame against neonicotinoid insecticides. In essence, bee-keepers tampered with the samples provided to Health Canada. In 2012 and 2013, when Health Canada visited bee-keepers to evaluate their dead bees, there was no legitimate chain of custody for the samples of dead bees that were allegedly poisoned by insecticide. Bee-keepers deliberately killed their bees with the malicious intent of coercing and intimidating government officials into prohibiting insecticides. Ontario inspectors and specialists must consider this scenario during its investigation. Ontario inspectors and specialists should further investigate as to why only a very limited number of bee-keepers were affected. Between April and June 2012, Health Canada received only a **VERY**

LIMITED NUMBER, less than 1.5 per cent, of reports of bee losses from across southern Ontario, involving a mere 40 bee-keepers, as well as 1 report from Quebec. At present, there are 2,900 bee-keepers in Ontario, therefore, the affected bee-keepers represent less than 1.5 per cent of all bee-keepers in Ontario. In 2013, Health Canada said it continued to receive a VERY LIMITED NUMBER of reports about bee losses. Why are only a VERY LIMITED NUMBER of bee-keepers affected ?!?! Why don't Ontario inspectors and specialists investigate the killing of bees by bee-keepers ?!?! Ontario inspectors and specialists must test the bee-keepers' residences and clothing for residue. Observers point out to how much money the bee-keepers will make once they launch a class-action lawsuit that is supported by the politically-motivated decision of Health Canada. Anti-pesticide lunatic bee-keepers will say anything and do anything in order to increase the profit of their vested interests. Additionally, bee-keepers will say anything and do anything in order to coerce and intimidate government officials into prohibiting insecticides. Anti pesticide bee-keepers lie about the death of their bees. Even the most prominent bee-keepers, like Randy Oliver, disagree with them. See link below. Bee-keepers also lie about the fact that bee deaths are actually the fault of their mis-management practices. Overall, throughout the rest of the world, there is no legitimate scientific evidence that suggests a link between neonicotinoid insecticides and bee deaths, or bee colony collapse disorder. Let the bee-keepers face the spotlight of scrutiny and the terror of the courts. For more information regarding BEE-KEEPERS KILLING THEIR OWN BEES and RANDY OLIVER, go to The Pesticide Truths Web-Site ... <http://wp.me/p1jq40-7fx> For more information regarding BEES, go to ... <http://wp.me/p1jq40-2ba> <http://wp.me/p1jq40-6WJ> <http://wp.me/p1jq40-6H8> WILLIAM H. GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G <http://pesticidetruths.com/> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-2rr>