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Supporting the coexistence of insecticide-treated seeds and bees



March 15, 2013

In the spring of 2012, federal and provincial authorities responded to reports of bee losses in certain parts of Ontario and Quebec. As an industry committed to a vibrant and productive agricultural sector, the plant science industry understands why affected beekeepers are concerned and will continue to seek improved collaboration among all parties to further understand what happened so we can reduce the likelihood of similar incidents happening again.

Our industry welcomes any new information that will further our understanding of bee health, an issue that is widely recognized by Canadian and international bee researchers to be a complex issue that is influenced by a variety of factors including parasites, weather and disease. While the PMRA report says the planting of insecticide-treated corn seed contributed to the losses last spring, they also note that unusual weather conditions were likely a contributing factor.

Our industry has taken several proactive steps to provide additional protection for bees from short-term exposure to pesticides, recognizing that these beneficial insects are not the target of these products. Steps taken to date include:

- Developing a comprehensive set of best management practices for planting insecticide-treated corn during the handling, pre-planting and planting phases of seeding;
- Working with regulators to develop new language for treated seed bags to better inform growers about potential impacts of seed dust on pollinators; and
- Working to establish better communications and proactive relationships between beekeepers, growers and industry to help protect pollinators and find solutions to ongoing pollinator health issues.

Canada's plant science industry is committed to the protection of bee health and is actively engaged with growers ahead of the 2013 planting season to raise awareness of best management practices for planting treated corn seed.

Bees and crop protection products are both vitally important to agricultural production. Bees pollinate many important crops and pesticides play a crucial role in protecting these crops from potentially devastating pest damage. Seed treatment insecticides, specifically, have an important role to play in protecting crops from insects in a way that reduces the potential for non-target exposure to pesticides.

Given the interdependence of pollinators and agriculture, our industry has a vested interest in helping to ensure good bee health. We are committed to working together with all stakeholders to support the coexistence of bees and insecticide seed treatments.

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CropLife Canada is the trade association representing the manufacturers, developers and distributors of plant science innovations — pest control products and plant biotechnology — for use in agriculture, urban and public health settings.

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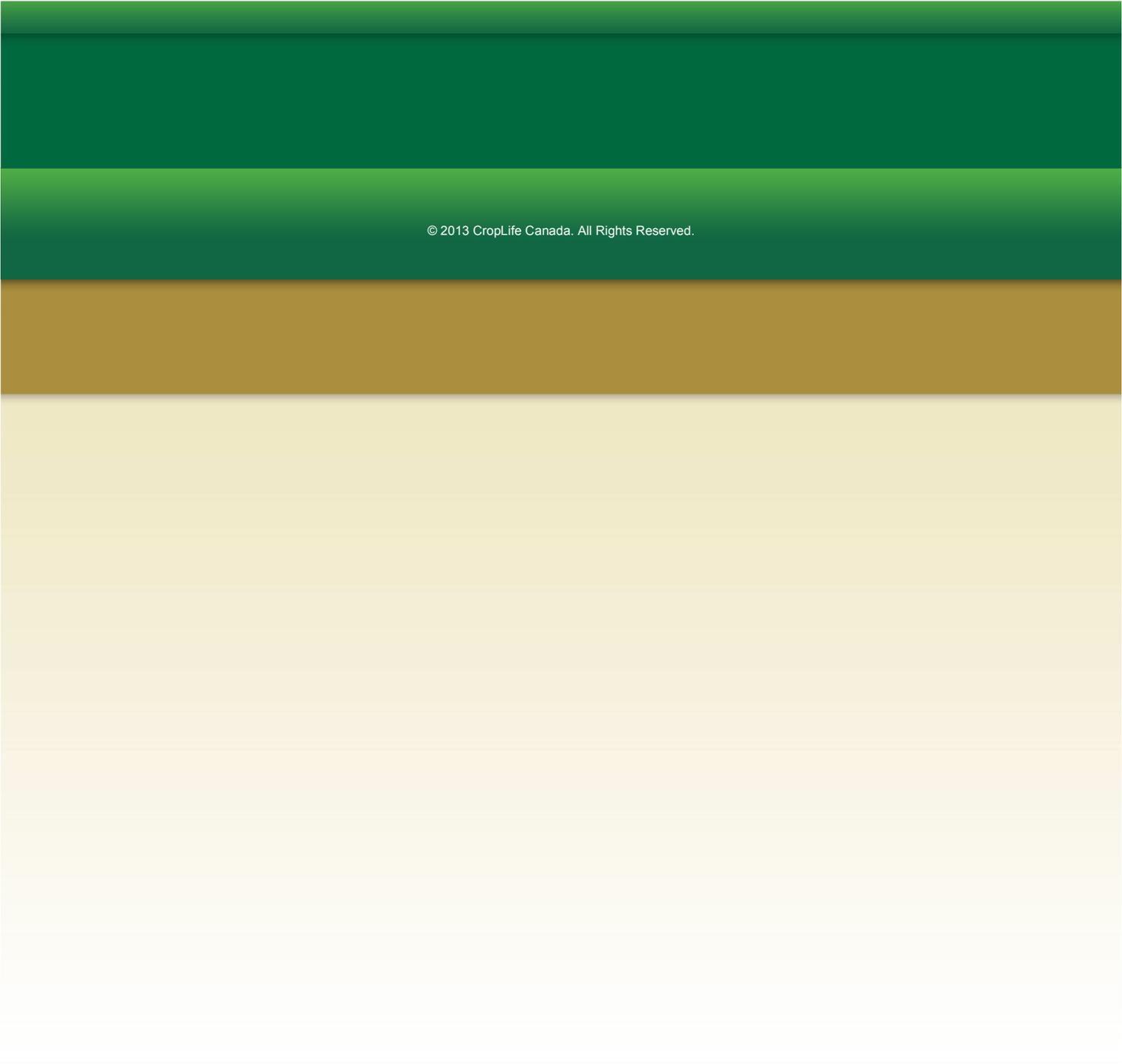


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