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Honey bee deaths prompt Ontario to bring in experts on possible pesticide link



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TORONTO – All the buzz about dead bees is prompting Ontario to seek help...

by Maria Babbage, The Canadian Press on Tuesday, July 9, 2013 1:39pm - [2 Comments](#)

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TORONTO – All the buzz about dead bees is prompting Ontario to seek help from a group of experts.

A bee health working group is being formed to make recommendations on how to mitigate the potential risk of a certain pesticide to honey bees, the governing Liberals said Tuesday.

The pesticide – neonicotinoid – is used for corn and soybeans.

The group will comprise beekeepers, farmers, people in agri-business and scientists as well as staff from federal and provincial agencies. It will meet this month and provide recommendations by next spring, the government said.

Neonicotinoid pesticides have been banned by the European Union, which has been experiencing the same bee mortality problem, Sierra Club Canada said in a release.

“This working group is the first real recognition of the impact of neonicotinoid pesticides on bees,” executive director John Bennett said in the release.

According to the Canadian Honey Council, the bee population in Canada has dropped by an estimated 35 per cent in the past three years.

Many fear that the decline will have a severe impact on the pollination of many plants and the global food supply.

Pollination is responsible for 70 per cent of cultivated plants, and for 35 per cent of humans’ overall food consumption. Fewer bees means lower yields – notably apples, strawberries and cucumbers – and could ultimately mean a drop in the food supply.

But Health Canada’s Pest Management Regulatory Agency has failed to act, Bennett said.

The environmental organization asked federal Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq in April to ban the use of neonicotinoids in Canada, Bennett said. But she hasn’t responded.

The agency, which authorized neonicotinoid insecticides for commercialization in 2004, announced an evaluation of the situation in 2012 after bees’ increased mortality was reported.

A spokesman for the ministry said Health Canada is monitoring the situation closely and doesn't feel a broad suspension is warranted.

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Norah G Fon · 2 days ago

The bee-keepers are merely looking for so-called experts WHO AGREE WITH THEM as they seek arbitrary and ineffectual prohibition. Any prohibition of pest control products is not necessary. Between April and June 2012, Health Canada received a small number 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. The information evaluated to date suggests that insecticides used on treated corn seeds contributed to many of the bee losses. Health Canada has issued a document entitled reducing risk from treated seeds which recommends Best Management Practices for corn growers. This document is archived on The Pesticide Truths Web-Site. <http://wp.me/p1jq40-2ba> Additionally, in 2013, Health Canada will assess how well the Best Management Practices are working. Overall, there is no evidence to suggest a link between insecticides called neonicotinoids and bee deaths, or bee colony collapse disorder. Overall,

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