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## Is CropLife buying influence?

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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OTTAWA -- Just as Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) is considering a ban on bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides, the ag industry trade association CropLife named long time Conservative MP Ted Menzies as its new President and CEO.

"Is the pesticide industry attempting to influence a pending decision on the future of bee-killing pesticides or is it a coincidence?" asked John Bennett of Sierra Club Canada.

Bee pollination is essential to the functioning of our ecosystem and the production of most fruits and vegetables. When bee populations start to mysteriously and rapidly die-off, it's a very big deal.

In September, PMRA [confirmed](#) neonicotinoid pesticides (including Clothianidin, manufactured by Bayer) are killing bees and asked for public comment (deadline December 12, 2013). Thousands of Canadians and beekeepers have already strongly urged the PMRA to ban the bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides.

CropLife has been actively waging a PR campaign to confuse the public about these pesticides – ironically originally marketed as 'safer' than other pesticides. CropLife suggests there haven't been big bee losses while at the same time [blaming](#) viruses, parasites and beekeepers for their obvious declining populations.

Over the last decade, use of neonicotinoid pesticides has grown at an unprecedented rate. Almost every corn and soybean seed now arrives at the farm gate already coated with the neurotoxin.

In Europe, where neonicotinoids were first introduced, massive mortality of bee and pollinating insect populations led to the European Union banning them. In 2012, beekeepers in Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba suffered huge die-offs – and early reports from 2013 are grim as well. In early



August, David Schuit of Elmwood Ontario [lost several million bees](#) alone.

"The PMRA says the decision will be based on science and there is now a [significant body of evidence](#) that neonicotinoid pesticides are the culprit," said Mr. Bennett. "We are happy to see a decision truly based on science -- CropLife clearly isn't."

Because of dangerously weak federal ethics and lobbying rules, Mr. Menzies is allowed to become President and CEO of a federally regulated company that lobbies the federal government regularly.

Mr. Menzies should be very aware that there are two ethics rules that apply to him in his new job. Under section 33 of the *Conflict of Interest Act*, he is prohibited from acting in any way that takes "improper advantage" of his time as a Cabinet minister, and subsection 34(2) prohibits him from giving "advice to his or her client, business associate or employer using information that was obtained in his or her capacity as a public office holder and is not available to the public."

Whether or not Mr. Menzies 'technically' does any lobbying, his position as President and CEO of CropLife clearly opens government doors and provides valuable insight on the internal workings of the Harper government.

"Are we supposed to believe Mr. Menzies will lock himself in his new office and not take calls or check his email," said Mr. Bennett.

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