



Pesticide said to killing honey bees

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PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY — WHICH IS RICH WITH FARMLAND — IS TAKING THE ISSUE SERIOUSLY.

A CHEMICAL THAT’S WIDELY USED BY FARMERS TO PROTECT THEIR CROPS — COULD ALSO BE KILLING THE HONEY BEES. PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY — WHICH IS RICH WITH FARMLAND — IS TAKING THE ISSUE SERIOUSLY. THE COUNTY HAS NOW IMPOSED A BAN ON USING THE NICOTINE-BASED CHEMICAL ON ITS LAND ... AND THEY WANT IT BANNED PROVINCE WIDE. NEWSWATCH’S MAEGEN KULCHAR REPORTS.

Gavin North checks over his honey bees to see how they are doing— this is one of only 40 hives that he had to replace this year. Over the winter he lost half of them— not just due to the cold weather.

he also suspects a pesticide called neonicotinoid.

“we are finding now that the rate of losses is getting to be unsustainable.”

The pesticide, also known as 'neonic' is a coating found on soy and corn seeds which helps protect the crops from certain insects found in the soil. It's approved by Health Canada. But North says the toxic chemical is also absorbed by bees — while pollinating plants and drinking water.

“They don't make it through the winter because the food that they've stored is toxic to them.”

“Bees may seem to have an easy job, but in fact they are hard workers— they not only help bee keepers produce honey but they are a crucial part of the environment.”

“Studies have shown that toxins are showing up in pond life and other creatures like dragonflies which are important pollinators and important food sources.”

The common farm insecticide has also become an issue for farmers like Max Kaiser.

“We have the issues that it's needed to protect the crops.”

On Kaisers farm, his corn seeds are covered in the chemical— something he can't avoid using to protect his crops from soil borne worms and insects.

“Pollinators are very important to cropping as is the rest of nature so whether or not we are inadvertently killing off our pollinators is very concerning to us.”

Kaiser says the neonic affects 1 percent of the bee population— but to help out that small percentage, he has dedicated a section of crop land where he is experimenting with neonic-free seeds.

“We have to try and produce as much food as possible using the resources we have and limiting our impacts.”

Prince Edward County Council has decided not to use the chemical on municipal owned land — something North agrees with and hopes the government will impose a province wide ban.... to help keep his colonies buzzing.

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