



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Actions Taken to Support the Health of Bees and Other Pollinators

Actions were developed based on input from the Ontario Bee Health Working Group.

Options for Action	Status
A - Update Best Management Practices (BMPs)	<p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The revised BMPs have been extensively promoted at grower meetings and are available on line. <p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The revised BMPs have been extensively promoted by the Ministry at grower meetings, through hand outs and publications and are available on line. They have been distributed by the Grain Farmers of Ontario to over 30,000 corn and soybean producers and agri-business representative. All major seed companies are distributing best management practices information through their seed dealers. The agricultural input industry (e.g., CropLife, Bayer CropScience, Syngenta) has also been promoting BMPs in the agricultural press, at grower meetings and directly to growers and agri-businesses. Growing Forward 2 (GF2) funding support is available for grain growers to implement best management practices to protect pollinators. Scouting services to identify risk levels of soil borne insects are eligible under GF2 Capacity Building. These services will complement other initiatives to increase growers' adoption of integrated pest management practices. GF2 will also support the modification of planters to decrease the risk of contaminated dust moving off the field. The Ministry is evaluating other options to encourage beekeepers and grain growers to adopt BMPs.
B - Invest in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Research	<p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry funding is being directed to support the development of an IPM guide for the identification and management of soil borne insects. Ministry staff are collaborating with University of Guelph researchers to access industry funding to support research to evaluate soil borne pest populations across multiple sites in the province. This project will assist in understanding the implications and risk factors associated with using treated as opposed to untreated seed in various locations across Ontario. Updates of key findings will be made available on the Ministry website.

C - Promote Availability of Non-Insecticide Treated Seed	<p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry collaborated with the Grain Farmers of Ontario (GFO) and the Canadian Seed Trade Association in the promotion of non-insecticide treated seed for spring (2014) planting, with increased varieties now available for the 2014 growing season.
D - Encourage Development of New Seed Treatments	<p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Directions Bee Health Program funding is enabling the evaluation of new polymers and their interaction with the new Fluency Agent and with planter modifications. A summary of this research will be made available upon the completion of the project. The Ministry will incorporate any new seed treatments into the Field Crop Protection Guide which is updated every second year with a supplement released in the intervening year. The Guide is publicly available on the Ministry website.
E - Centralize and Communicate Bee Location Data	<p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through Ministry funding and with collaboration between Grain Farmers of Ontario and the Ontario Beekeepers' Association an app is in development to improve the ability of grain growers and beekeepers to connect with each other. The app will be piloted in the 2014 season and plans are to have the app fully functional by 2015.
F - Develop Strategy for Pollinator-Friendly Habitats	<p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ministry is in the process of removing five weeds from the <i>Weeds Control Act</i> which will enhance the habitat for bees around corn and soybean fields. There is an opportunity for government and industry, including the recently announced chair in pollinator conservation at the University of Guelph (December 2013), to work collaboratively on an Ontario Pollinator Health Strategy which will include pollinator friendly habitats.
G - Investigate Modifications for Air Planters	<p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry staff are working closely with industry partners to increase growers' ability to access air planter deflector kits prior to Spring (2014) planting. A guidance document to assist growers to make modifications to their planters has been developed and widely circulated across Ontario by OMAF, agri-business, the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and the farm press. Producers who need to modify planters may apply to GF2 for funding support.

H - Promote ISO Standard for Air Planters	<p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Association of Equipment Manufacturers is leading the development of the standard. • The ISO standard is expected to be in place by 2015 for application by manufacturers in 2016
I - Stakeholders Promote New Fluency Powder	<p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PMRA has made the new fluency agent mandatory for all seed lubrication for the spring of 2014.
J - Update the Ontario Pesticide Safety Course	<p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ontario Pesticide Safety Course has been updated with new information related to protecting pollinators. • Over 5,300 growers have been trained for this growing season on the updated information. • Over the five year certification cycle, more than 22,000 growers are expected to receive training on the revised material.
K - Encourage Crop Rotation	<p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a standard cropping systems recommendation that is widely implemented across Ontario.
L - Require Grower Consultation Prior to Purchasing Neonicotinoid Treated Seeds	<p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive effort, both by OMAF and by the agricultural input industry (e.g., seed and pesticide) has been made to have certified crop advisors, agricultural input industry representatives and growers aware of the recommended BMPs. • The Ministry funded Soil Borne Insect Guide, which will contain descriptions of insects, thresholds and scouting suggestions, will enable certified crop advisors and the agricultural input industry to be able to provide their growers with information to assist in decisions about the need for seed treatment.
M - Consider a Temporary Ban of Neonicotinoids	<p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry will host a forum with other jurisdictions including France, Italy, England and Australia to better understand how and why decisions were made regarding restricting or not restricting neonicotinoid seed treatments and what their experience has been. • The Pest Management Regulatory Agency is expediting the re-evaluation of all uses of neonicotinoid insecticides and is implementing measures under its jurisdiction to protect pollinators until the review is complete.

Specific actions of the Ministry of the Environment, in cooperation with other partners:

Monitoring programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ontario's Ministry of the Environment is continuing two existing monitoring programs and will be embarking on a third program beginning in 2014.• One of the existing programs focuses on analyzing water samples in 17 agricultural streams for three neonicotinoid pesticides as part of its routine stream monitoring program (in partnership with OMAF). Preliminary results of this monitoring have been shared with Ontario Beekeepers' Association and other groups.• The other existing program involves the collection of samples of bees in partnership with PMRA and OMAF, whereby samples of bees are collected for analysis of pesticides.• The new program is a monitoring program to evaluate areas with high and low bee mortalities - it investigates presence of pesticides in the water, soil and food sources that bees may encounter. The Ministry, with partners, is expected to begin carrying out the field elements of this program the first week of May 2014.• OMAF staff are supporting PMRA and MOE by conducting agricultural surveys of growers within one km of identified bee yards.
---------------------	---

For more information:

Toll Free: 1-877-424-1300

Local: (519) 826-4047

E-mail: ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca