



## Media responses

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**Bee population thriving, Welland Tribune, The Standard, Sun Times, Whitehorse Star, Niagara Falls Review, Northumberland Today, St. Thomas Times-Journal, October 8, 2014**



*October 8, 2014*

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario recently said that bees are the canary in the coal mine. If that is indeed the case then he might want to rethink the alarm bell he raised in his recent report.

Contrary to what the commissioner states, bee populations in this country have been growing for close to two decades and are currently more robust than ever. In Ontario, specifically, the honey bee population has actually increased 37 per cent since 2003. This according to Stats Canada, which has been watching bee population numbers since the 1920s.

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario is also mistaken in his attempts to dismiss the benefits of neonicotinoid seed treatment technology. A recent study from the Conference Board of Canada estimated that farmers could lose up to \$630 million a year if they did not have access to neonicotinoid seed treatments.

It is evident that the Environmental Commissioner did not seek input from farmers who actually use the technology because if he did, he would have heard about the many benefits it offers. Neonicotinoid seed treatments help farmers protect their crops in more targeted way as seeds are coated and planted directly into the ground. This means that beneficial insects, such as bees, are much less likely to come into contact with the insecticide.

Though some beekeepers have experienced losses, particularly due to harsh winter conditions, such losses have been occurring for decades – long before neonicotinoids were even on the market. To suggest that eliminating neonicotinoids will somehow change this natural pattern is erroneous.

The reality is that, despite the thriving bee population, there are a number of threats to bees, including disease, weather, nutrition, habitat, genetic diversity and beekeeping practices. As the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario himself noted, we must take a holistic approach to addressing bee health that takes into account all of these factors.

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Sincerely,

Pierre Petelle

Vice-president of chemistry, CropLife Canada

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