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Ontario moves toward curbing pesticide blame
for bee deaths

Ontario inching closer to curbing use of neurotoxic pesticide blamed in massive bee kills



CARLOS OSORIO / TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

The Agriculture Ministry says 58 per cent of the province's bees died over last winter — a record in what was also an unusually cold season.

By: **Rob Ferguson** Queen's Park Bureau, Published on Tue Nov 25 2014

Ontario is moving closer to curbing a class of pesticides blamed for massive bee kills that endanger the pollination of crops and the environment.

Agriculture Minister Jeff Leal announced Tuesday that the province is "working towards" reducing the number of acres planted with neonicotinoid-coated corn and soybean seeds by 80 per cent by 2017.

The next step is to have new rules in place by July so that reduction measures can begin in time for the 2016 planting season, making the environment safer for bees engaged in pollination and making honey.

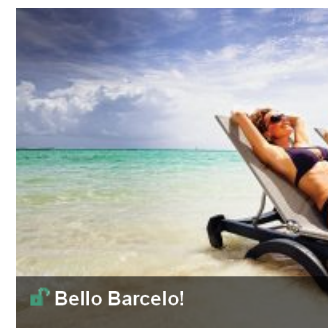
"We know that there is more that can be done, and we will work with farmers," Leal said in a statement that was quickly challenged by a pesticide manufacturer.

"This is a bad day for Ontario agriculture," said CropLife Canada, calling neonicotinoids "one of the safest insecticides ever developed."

"We are disappointed that the government of Ontario intends to disadvantage Ontario

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farmers by informing an ill-informed reduction target.”

Beekeepers have criticized the government for not moving fast enough given what has happened in other jurisdictions, but applauded the announcement.

The Ontario Beekeepers Association credited the government for “moving decisively and measurably to significantly limit the use of these toxic chemicals,” president Tibor Szabo said in a statement.

“The OBA appreciates the government’s recognition that the prophylactic use of neonicotinoid-coated seed on Ontario’s corn and soy crops is unwarranted and unacceptable.”

The European Commission, for example, has restricted the sale and use of the pesticides since 2013, with Japan, France, Germany, Italy and eastern Ontario’s Prince Edward County taking various forms of action already.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath noted many bees have died in the last year waiting for the government to act, despite repeated warnings from the beekeeping industry.

“It’s certainly taken a long time,” she told reporters, accusing the Liberal government of deciding to “drag out the implementation.”

The pesticide disrupts the ability of bees, along with other pollinators such as birds and butterflies, to feed, navigate and reproduce and makes them more susceptible to illness.

Leal’s ministry acknowledged that 58 per cent of the province’s bees died over last winter — a record in what was also an unusually cold season.

Earlier this year, two major beekeeping firms spearheaded the launch of a \$450-million class-action lawsuit against two pesticide manufacturers, alleging their products have caused widespread deaths in bee colonies.

Health Canada has also blamed chemicals in the pesticides for mass bee kills and an Ontario Agriculture Ministry field crop entomologist has said the pesticide seed treatments should be used “only when necessary” in the 10 to 20 per cent of soils susceptible to wireworm and grubs.

An international panel of 50 scientists working as the Task Force on Systemic Pesticides has called for neonics to be phased out, and is calling on authorities to restrict their use saying they also harm worms and birds.

Neonics, which are also applied through a spray, make up roughly 40 per cent of the insecticide market, with global sales nearing \$3 billion in 2011.

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are not applied through a spray but are either a seed treatment applied to the seed at the time of planting or applied as a powder to the seed prior to planting. Neonics make up 40% of the seed treatment market but not 40% of the insecticide market. The chemical is only bad if used incorrectly. There are kits that can be added to most planters that would mitigate most risk.

advocating the use of neonics but as a farmer I also know there is a place for this product
3... » more

3 ago 0 Likes

L
these semi-literate people who write the Star's headlines? (Same comment for the headline on the CBC's Newsworld.)

3 ago 1 Like

ary
Toronto Star ,
I would be grateful to have an opportunity to express myself and, as I have explained earlier, I would be willing to become a paid subscriber ...
I would like to see that half the first year's proceeds go to your fresh air fund (the Sally Ann), or other suitable cause. I am even willing to let you do the picking.

near from you one of these days /
I don't believe a paper boy for the (damned) Telly

3 ago (edited recently) 0 Likes

ary
It's been far too long to react to this emergency ... another example (perhaps) of civil servants who are not on their jobs for dear life, and praying 'not me' ??

3 ago 0 Likes

It is not the government to be blamed for all this. What company caused this MONSANTO most likely? What agencies did they face? None absolutely none. Why? Because they are one of the special interest groups that handles the government. If any average Joe/Jane created a product that killed off a significant portion of bee's I think someone would be paying the price now.

3 ago 0 Likes

Mats
@reded1

Hate to burst your bubble but Neonics and GMO have absolutely nothing to do with each other. Where on earth do you find stuff like this?

minutes ago 0 Likes



reded1

@Mats Hate to burst your bubble but GMO's are the reason why bee numbers are so low.

9 minutes ago 0 Likes

luy

we go. Just wait for it; a deluge of posts from the usual suspects, decrying the 'nanny state', violation of their rights to spew anything anywhere they like, and nobody has actually proved that pesticides are harmful, and if they did it must be a leftist plot, and why should WE be the first ones to stop. We only use 2% of the pesticides in Canada, and how they're going to move to Alberta, where they pollute the environment to their heart's content.

0 Likes

d519

Wow! I am so sick of the 'we need to move slowly' - MOVE IT! The public supports the ban.

1 Like

ig

Important. Slow, plodding and a bit too weak, but it's progress. I just hope it's not too late. The ban is critical.

2 Likes

ix

Ontario how about just simple ban on these products period! Oh yea, I forgot for a moment how much your rights have become to act unilaterally in the best interests of your province and if you get out ahead of the American jurisdictions, where free trade is not the Law, you will be the manufacturers of the pesticides for like hundreds of millions of dollars, but if you wait until other jurisdictions have banned it then you can act because their decisions are your... » more

2 Likes

sssa

Headline; it makes it sound as though Ontario is moving towards removing blame from the pesticides. Just needs a "d" on the end of "blame".

o (edited) 4 Likes

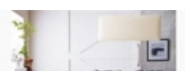
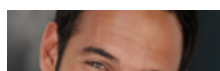
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