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Decrease of neonicotinoids will not currently affect apple growers

The Government of Ontario recently announced that it will decrease the usage of neonicotinoids, a group of chemicals which acts as a pesticide. The most widely used pesticide in the world, neonicotinoids target seed treatments in corn and soy bean crop by deterring pests such as aphids and root-feeding grubs. However, during growth a coat of dust from the chemicals develops on the seed and when released into the air becomes toxic to bees and other pollinators like birds and butterflies.

"The Federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency and the Canadian chemical industry have approved a modification for growers," explains Charles Stevens, chair of the Ontario Apple Growers Association. "Seeds are now coated with a polymer to reduce the emission of bee dust by 70%. However by 2017, the government wants to reduce the amount of acres treated with neonicotinoids to 80%." Ontario also plans to create a Pollinator Health Action plan which includes cutting bee mortality rates in the winter months to 15% by the year 2020 in order to create better bee health and hive management.

The current decrease of neonicotinoids was initiated by political means and public concern. Growers are sceptical if the reduction of such pesticides will eventually involve horticulture. However, most Ontario growers treat with neonicotinoids as part of Integrated Pest Management. Growers are then forced to balance pesticide use with pollinator decline.



The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) which represents the federal government registers products for use in Canada, including registering labels so growers understand how to use conventional methods. However the provincial government is able to overrule chemical guidelines and laws to ban any products.

"Growers would love for this issue to be discussed through an agricultural initiative, and not a political one," states Stevens, "all issues with human and bee exposure to neonicotinoids were tested before the product was released. But that one small occurrence of harming bees was undiagnosed during trials."

The apple industry supports the registration process for pesticide materials enforced by PRMA and the federal government. "Other countries do not have a registration process, so some conventional products are unavailable for their use," states Stevens, "Canada's registration process is positively looked upon worldwide as the focus is the health and welfare of Canadian citizens."



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Top 5 - yesterday

- > After 33 years Chiquita swaps Antwerp for Vlissingen
- > Russell IPM develops solution against fruit flies
- > China's citrus woes good for California oranges
- > Capespan acquires 25% stake in German importer
- > Winfresh suspends purchase of bananas from Dominica

Top 5 - last week

- > Oligarchs profit from boycott
- > "Growing Chinese demand for imported fruit, but logistics a challenge"
- > After 33 years Chiquita swaps Antwerp for Vlissingen
- > US: Safeway sells real estate arm
- > Property Development Centers for \$830mln
- > UK bound produce destroyed if immigrants found

Top 5 - last month

- > Antioxidant activity of citrus juices undervalued
- > Kenyan herbal tea on the rise
- > How Canada Safeway acquisition is impacting Sobseys
- > Vietnam ban on AU produce imports likely
- > Russia strikes first blow on EU fruit and veg

Exchange rates

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- > USD: 1.1768
- > JPY: 141.00
- > GBP: 0.78110
- > AUD: 1.4518
- > BRL: 3.1774
- > CAD: 1.3905
- > CNY: 7.3152
- > NZD: 1.5113
- > ZAR: 13.6912

Euro foreign exchange reference rates
Source: ECB

At the moment regulation changes from the Ontario government does not address apples, so there are no restrictions on conventional apple growth. Exempting neonicotinoids are used for apple production so the chemicals do not interfere with the safety of bees. The product is also safe for humans and animals, only targeting specific insects which are harmful to apples.

Bees are vastly important to apple growers as they are the main insect pollinator. Hives of honeybees are rented during blooming season to ensure the highest amount of pollination possible. Any chemicals which are toxic to bees are not used during the growth period. "Apple growers love bees," reflects Stevens, "we need materials to eliminate unwanted pests, but if we used a product that was toxic to bees, there would be no apple pollination, and you would not have apples."

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- 1/8/2015 Sunburn in apples: A hot problem
- 1/8/2015 US (MN): Apple growers meet to improve industry
- 1/8/2015 South African grape exporters go east
- 1/8/2015 Mexico: Jalisco exports over 90% of berry production
- 1/8/2015 Bangladesh: Strawberry farming gains momentum
- 1/8/2015 India: Sangli grapes to be exported to EU
- 1/8/2015 Melon demand slow during Canadian winter season
- 1/7/2015 UK: Bumper cherry crop predicted in 2015
- 1/7/2015 Florida starts strawberry shipments a week late
- 1/7/2015 'Cherry charters' fly tons of lucky red fruit to Chinese tables
- 1/7/2015 Honduras: Melons creating employment
- 1/7/2015 Chile: Blueberries to be promoted in Sweden and Norway
- 1/7/2015 Chile set to ship more cherries to India
- 1/7/2015 2015 pear Stemilt-O-Graphic released
- 1/7/2015 Hungary: Contest to promote apple consumption
- 1/6/2015 US (MI): Farmers receive \$5.6 million for 2012 crop damages
- 1/6/2015 Peru: Grapes exports worth over US\$450 million in 2014

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