



# Bee policy sting: Why farmers will suffer under Ontario's new regulations



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**STEPHEN DENYS, SPECIAL TO FINANCIAL POST** | June 17, 2015 9:57 AM ET

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SAEED KHAN/AFP/Getty ImagesStephen Denysv: The reality is Ontario farmers are being subjected to policies that will increase production costs while placing Ontario farmers at a disadvantage to farmers elsewhere in North America.

***The regulations will also force farmers to regress several decades in their cultural practices***

Ontario's proposed neonicotinoid regulations, designed to protect bees, support ideology over science and environmental activists over the farmers that feed our population. The reality is bee populations are under stress primarily from varroa mites, diseases, habitat concerns, and the failure by some to improve their hive management practices to modern day standards. Neonics and other pesticides are also factors, but well down the list.

These are not my conclusions, but the conclusions of beekeepers I have talked and worked with over the last two years. Beekeepers who manage thousands of hives, who averaged acceptable or even low overwintering losses compared to trumped-up provincial numbers; and who have all but given up on their own provincial association

given its fanatical and short-sighted stance on this issue. These beekeepers understand the risks associated with neonicotinoids but more importantly, the risk to bee health if these products are removed.

In the myriad documents released by the Ontario government on the subject, there was a list of research studies. Most of these studies have been discounted in scientific circles, either given their protocols or their premise. For example, many studies artificially exposed bees to extremely high rates of insecticide to determine the effect. Dosage rates the equivalent of locking you in a room, giving you 40 ounces of whiskey, telling you there is an hour to drink it and then measuring the impact. Common sense tells you the outcome of the study before it is undertaken.

## **If neonicotinoids were removed in the Prairies, canola acres would drop precipitously and bee numbers with them**

Interestingly there are two Ontario government researchers not cited. Their research was paid by the provincial government, done to international standards, and was not only ignored but muzzled. Their work showed that controlling emission dust from air planters reduces exposure; that despite claims by environmental groups, neonicotinoids have a short life in the soil and do not translocate in the plant to a level that will cause harm. In fact their research supported the plethora of studies submitted to the federal government before the products were registered over 15 years ago.

We need to look no further than Europe or Western Canada to understand the relationship between bees and neonicotinoids. The EU introduced a moratorium on neonicotinoid use two years ago with the goal of improving bee health. Bee health numbers have since declined, not improved. Some countries within the EU are looking to reverse the ruling or make crop exemptions. The irony is European farmers had to increase pesticide use to control insects like flea beetle. Some growers needed to spray three times last fall before plants were six inches tall versus zero times before. Many growers are now reducing their acres of winter oilseed rape, a crop that treated or untreated is a preferred food source for bees. Does this make sense?

In Western Canada where bee keepers are aghast at the Ontario policy given bee numbers have increased in lock step with the increase in canola acres – canola all treated with neonicotinoids. If neonicotinoids were removed in the Prairies, canola acres would drop precipitously and bee numbers with them.

A fact conveniently overlooked by the Ontario government and environmental groups is bees do not like corn and soybeans. Corn does not produce nectar and both crops are extremely hard for bees to pollinate, so they avoid them like the plague. The increase in corn and soybean acres in the province has led to a decrease in forage and pasture acres, making it more difficult for commercial beekeepers to find adequate food sources.

But is it my responsibility as a farmer to feed a commercial beekeeper's livestock free of charge? Will beekeepers or the government pay farmers to plant bee friendly habitat or will our property rights be progressively taken away? These are the types of questions many farmers are asking themselves. Farm organizations have tried to work with beekeeper associations to address their concerns, but have been repeatedly rejected. Farmers have also adopted practices that have dramatically reduced the initial concern, to the point where 70 per cent of the calls received by the government in 2014 were from 3 beekeepers, or less than 0.1 per cent of the beekeepers in the province. In fact the total land mass involved over the last 3 years represents a very small percentage of overall acres in Ontario. Unfortunately farm efforts that have achieved success have been brushed aside given the ideology of this government.

The reality is Ontario farmers are being subjected to policies that will increase production costs while placing Ontario farmers at a disadvantage to farmers elsewhere in North America. Meanwhile American corn, western canola and imported fruit and vegetables protected by neonicotinoids will still flow freely into Ontario.

The regulations will also force farmers to regress several decades in their cultural practices. The government's direction will also dramatically increase food costs. So much so that it will make the outrage on hydro rate increases in Ontario look like chump change. Agriculture is the next industry to face the wrecking ball of inept provincial government policy. Unfortunately it is the one industry we all need three times per day.

*Stephen Denys, a past president of the Canadian Seed Trade Association, farms near Chatham Ontario and is vice president with PRIDE Seeds.*

**NORAHG OPPOSES THE RECKLESS ONTARIO PROPOSAL THAT WILL INEVITABLY DESTROY THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY ! — NEONICOTINOID-HATIC FANATICS MUST BE STOPPED, FOREVER !**

Stephen Denys is ABSOLUTELY CORRECT ! Ontario's agriculture industry WILL BE inevitably facing destruction with the proposed prohibition against neonicotinoid insecticides that are desperately needed to effectively and safely control damaging pests of crops. The neonicotinoid-hating Ontario Liberal government and fanatic-activists are falsely alleging that these insecticides are supposed to cause so-called bee colony collapse disorder. The alleged losses of bees are, in fact, the fault of the bee-keepers and their mis-management practices. They are responsible, and not neonicotinoid insecticides. Some bee-keepers have no idea what they are doing, leading some observers to conclude that bee-keepers may NOT be competent to raise bees. Overall, there is NO bee crisis in Ontario because of insecticides, and hence, their prohibition in agriculture is NOT necessary ! There are long-term repercussions of fanatical-prohibition. Major global manufacturers are entirely abandoning all sectors of the pesticide industry, and are directing their resources towards more stable and lucrative markets, such as pharmaceutical and veterinary products. Manufacturers abhor operating in markets made unstable by fanatical and subversive prohibitions. Manufacturers cannot afford to spend 250 MILLION DOLLARS in order to satisfy federal scientific assessments, only to be RECKLESSLY AND ARBITRARILY UNDERMINED by local pesticide-hating governments, like Ontario. TWO-HUNDRED SEPARATE ASSESSMENTS are performed by 350 professional experts at Health Canada to ensure that neonicotinoid insecticides are federally legal, scientifically safe, and will cause NO harm. Pesticide-hating jurisdictions like Ontario prefer to RECKLESSLY AND ARBITRARILY UNDERMINE THE REGULATORY PROCESS with fanatical and subversive prohibition. If Canada is to become a haven for fanatical and subversive prohibitions that RECKLESSLY AND ARBITRARILY UNDERMINE scientific federal assessments, manufacturers will shun Canada, and go elsewhere ! Consequently, the manufacturers are terrified at the prospect of investing hundreds of millions of dollars on the research and registration of new products in an unstable Canada. <http://wp.me/p1jq40-26p> Fanatical prohibitions harms manufacturers, harms businesses, and harms everyone, and MUST BE STOPPED ! There must be NO anti-neonicotinoid prohibition allowed in Ontario ! It must be stopped, forever ! There is NO other recourse but litigation and complaints ! CropLife Canada, Grain Farmers of Ontario, and all agricultural businesses, must sue the Ontario Liberal government and fanatic-activists' brains out ! They must stop the proposed fanatical prohibition in Ontario, whatever the cost may be ! For more information, go to The Pesticide Truths Web-Site ... <http://wp.me/p1jq40-8FZ> We are the National Organization Responding Against HUJE that conspire to destroy the Green space and other industries ( NORAH G ). As a non-profit and independent organization, we are environmentalists who are dedicated to reporting about NON-EXPERT PESTICIDE-HATING FANATIC-ACTIVISTS, as well as the work of RESPECTED and HIGHLY RATED EXPERTS who promote

ENVIRONMENTAL REALISM and PESTICIDE TRUTHS. <http://wp.me/p1jq40-8DV> Get the latest details at <http://pesticidetruths.com/> WILLIAM H GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G