



Neonicotinoid Insecticides Are Going To Be Banned

(In Ontario) Due To Uncaring Bee Keepers And Provincial Officials Including The Premier, Kathleen Wynneby *Art Drysdale*

by **Art Drysdale**

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For over a decade now, I have been intending to write about Neonicotinoid insecticides, and what is going on with them. About a year ago, the European Union banned them for a two-year period, and various jurisdictions in North America have been urged, and some have threatened to follow suit. The syndrome of the bees dying is often called Bee Colony Collapse Disorder.

The so-called problem is that the 'Neonics' (as they are sometimes nicknamed) are one of the products or practices being blamed for the demise of bees, and thus pollination may be at risk. However, Neonics are only one of the 'fall guys' being blamed. Before Neonics it was cell phones, and I forget how many other false ideas were presented because scientists could not find the real causal agent.

All of the usual suspects got on the bandwagon of decrying Neonics and encouraging bans from all sorts of jurisdictions—the Sierra Club being one of the leading antagonists.

The latest jurisdiction that is threatening an overall ban is our good friends at the Government of Ontario! New Premier Kathleen Wynne seems to be all in favour.

One province that is not getting on the ban bandwagon is Saskatchewan. Follows a letter from Saskatchewan's Minister of Agriculture, Lyle Stewart.

"Saskatchewan has a successful honey bee industry with about 100,000 colonies of bees that produce high quality honey and play a valuable role in the pollination of crops.

"As was noted, Saskatchewan does not currently plan to follow Ontario in implementing restrictions on neonicotinoid pesticides. The government respects Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency's (PMRA) scientific system to evaluate, register and monitor pest control products and sees PMRA's continuing evaluation of neonicotinoid insecticides as important. Decisions must be based on sound science.

"Moreover, there have been no reported incidents of neonicotinoid seed treatments affecting honey bees in Saskatchewan. Varroa mites and other diseases are the main health concerns to our beekeeping industry. When these diseases are controlled, beekeepers are very successful at maintaining healthy colonies.

"This is demonstrated by winter mortality rates in Saskatchewan that were below the five year average this year, despite a long, cold winter in 2013/2014. I would like to commend Saskatchewan's professional beekeepers for their work in mitigating the effects of the diseases that are the real cause of bee mortality.

"The government supports important research on bee health through the Agriculture Development Fund. The province has also collaborated with industry and producers to put in place DriftWatch, an online tool that helps identify drift sensitive agricultural areas including beehives to help manage potential effects of spray operations.

"We will continue our work with stakeholders to support a strong honey bee industry in Saskatchewan.

Lyle Stewart"

The pesticides, which generally coat seeds, are widely used in North America on corn, canola and about 50 per cent of soybeans, in addition to greenhouse flowers and vegetables. Provinces lack the power to ban pesticides, which are regulated by Health Canada. But Ontario is poised to become the first to regulate them by moving

toward a licensing system that would require commercial growers apply to use them.

“Our goal is to develop a system that targets the use of neonicotinoid-treated seed to areas or circumstances where there is demonstrated need, recognizing the important role both pollinators and farmers play in Ontario’s agrifood industry,” Jeff Leal, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, said in a statement.

Bees are in trouble worldwide. Between 2006 and 2011, the average yearly decline in managed honey bee colonies in the United States was 33 per cent, the U.S. Department of Agriculture says. In the United Kingdom, 29 per cent of honeybee colonies did not survive the winter of 2012-2013, the highest death rate in Europe.

In Canada, the average winter loss since 2009-2010 is 20 per cent, after reaching a high of 35 per cent in 2007-2008, according to CAPA.

Read

more: <http://www.icangarden.com/document.cfm?task=viewdetail&itemid=10638&categoryid=25#ixzz4HkDiJfyi>