

THE WESTERN PRODUCER

PMRA's Proposed Neonic Ban Called Political

Posted Dec. 28th, 2016 by [Robert Arnason](#)



Scientists with Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency determined that levels of imidacloprid in water bodies near agricultural land are unacceptably high, which is putting aquatic insects at risk and a threat to animals that depend on those insects for food. | File photo

In November, Health Canada said that a nation-wide ban of imidacloprid, a neonicotinoid insecticide, was necessary because the chemical is a threat to aquatic insects.

In late December a University of Guelph expert said the government's conclusion was an "over-reaction" and a mistake.

"I'm not in agreement with the decision to ban (imidacloprid)... I don't agree that the weight of evidence suggests that that particular action is needed," said Paul Sibley, a U of G professor in environmental sciences.

"I do think some action is needed, but I think that (a ban) is essentially a politicized response, much as we saw in Europe when they banned (neonicotinoids) because of a pollination concerns."

Health Canada surprised many people in the agricultural trade when it proposed to phase out the use of imidacloprid over three to five years.

Scientists with Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency determined that levels of imidacloprid in water bodies near agricultural land are unacceptably high, which is putting aquatic insects at risk and a threat to animals that depend on those insects for food.

The Bayer insecticide is used as a seed treatment on field crops, but it is applied primarily to fruit, vegetables and potatoes in Canada. It was once the most popular insecticide in the world.

Because of the risk to aquatic insects such as midges and mayflies, Health Canada will also conduct a special review of two other neonicotinoid insecticides: thiamethoxam, a Syngenta product, and clothianidin, a Bayer product.

Neonicotinoids are applied as seed treatments to almost all of the corn and canola planted in North America and a portion of soybean acres.

The class of insecticides has been highly controversial over the last five years because of their link to bee deaths and bee colony losses. In 2013, the European Commission banned the use of neonics in an effort to protect bees.

Sibley compared Health Canada's proposed phase out for imidacloprid to Europe's ban on all neonics because political pressure likely influenced both decisions.

“There is a heavy, heavy lobby from beekeepers and others, largely environmentalists, to outright ban these chemicals,” Sibley said.

“They (the PMRA) say it’s driven by their risk assessment, but there is a lot of pressure from other groups.”

Sibley tempered his remarks, saying the PMRA is a “model organization on how to deal with pesticides.”

However, in this case he disagrees with its position.

“What bothers me ... is there was no consideration of intermediate, middle of the (road) approaches in dealing with this problem,” he said.

“There are a number of so-called best management practices that we could incorporate, (which) would lead to a reduction in the environmental concentration of the neonics. The decision not to do that (middle ground) and the decision to phase out, I think that’s where the politics comes in.... That little bit of politicization really made the difference between what I say (is) a slightly more rational approach and what I see as a fairly irrational approach.”

Sibley studies how pesticides affect aquatic species, and this year one of his graduate students has been working with Ontario’s environment ministry to study thresholds, or concentrations in water where neonicotinoids and other pesticides become a threat to aquatic insects such as mayflies and midges.

“She has developed a very robust set of acute toxicity exposures,” he said.

Based on the student’s lab research, Health Canada’s proposed thresholds for imidacloprid are too low, Sibley said.

Government scientists have suggested an acute, or maximum, level of 360 nanograms per litre for imidacloprid in ponds and water bodies, he said.

“On the chronic side, .041 ng/l. We’re talking 41 nanograms per litre.... Extremely low.”

Environment Canada monitoring has found that concentrations of neonicotinoids, in water bodies in southern Ontario, are typically 10 to 40 ng/l, although much higher levels have been found in creeks in regions with intense fruit and vegetable production.

The Ontario government is the primary funder of Sibley's study on pesticide thresholds. His graduate student plans to publish a paper sometime this year.

Sibley said the government and the public's focus on neonicotinoids is myopic and misguided, particularly when it comes to water bodies in rural Canada.

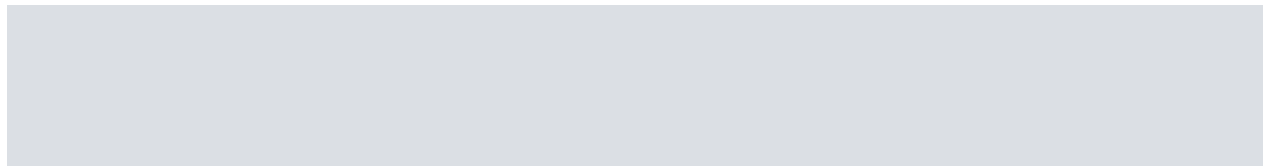
"Compared to what is driving problems in streams and ponds, neonics aren't the issue. The issue is things like habitat loss or (excessive) nutrients," he said.

"I think a lot of this is being overlooked when (people) think of about things just in terms of a chemical or a class of chemicals."

Health Canada will accept comments on its proposed phase out of imidacloprid until Feb. 21.

Contact robert.arnason@producer.com

- 6 Comments
- **The Western Producer**



Harold • [7 days ago](#)

Although Environment Canada monitoring has found higher than acceptable concentrations of neonicotinoids in water bodies, Mr Sibley says;

"Compared to what is driving problems in streams and ponds, neonics aren't the issue. The issue is things like habitat loss or (excessive) nutrients,"

Is he fracturing environmental science to suit? Color to infect the understanding? Either way, if habitat loss and nutrients were not a issue, are neonicotinoids nonetheless a stand-alone concern.

The article states; "On the chronic side, .041 ng/l. We're talking 41 nanograms per litre.... Extremely low."

When the value is compared to Zero, is 41 nanograms per litre extremely low. The value of Zero is with the intent that neonicotinoids were never intended to reach the streams and rivers. I wonder what state we would all be in if our rivers and streams were to suddenly reverse course.

The Ontario government is the primary funder of Sibley's study on pesticide thresholds. It is important to note that it is not in the interest of anyone to report that there is no problem. If there is no problem, then there is no direct funding. That is to say that if neonicotinoids are banned, then funding is removed. This is where you find "Political", "Politicized", and "Political influence".

Clearly Mr. Sibley has not been funded to protect the Bee's or the streams. (environment). Funded to protect pesticide use? (Bayer, Syngenta, etc.)

By his citing Health Canada, Europe, PMRA. European commission, Environmentalists. "other groups", Ontario environment ministry, Mr. Sibley places himself in a very small number, (himself and his student) whereby In Science, small numbers do not exist. As Mr. Sibley say's, "That little bit of politicization really made the difference between what I say (is) a slightly more rational approach and what I see as a fairly irrational approach."

Of course, Bayer, Syngenta, "Agriculture trade", (investors) would likely agree with him. "Irrational approach" indeed.

Norah G Fon Harold • [in a few seconds](#)Hold on, this is waiting to be approved by The Western Producer.

.41 nanograms per litres is equivalent to 0.00041 part per billion, or 0.41 parts per trillion. Yes, TRILLION ! Your zero-tolerance approach is mind-numbingly stupid, to say the least. And actually, the enviro-fanatics represent the smallest number of people, in the mere hundreds, who politically dictate meaningless life-style choices against millions of hapless citizens. And what is irrational is ignoring the fact that we are now living in The Era Of Trump, which means mindless environmental terrorism will soon be coming to an end !

RobertWager Harold • 7 days ago

May I ask you what you consider a reasonable alternative to neonics?

Harold RobertWager • 5 days ago

What was the "reasonable alternative" to cigarette smoking and it's harm to the environment contained within the human body. To look for smoking alternative's, is to say that smoke belonged in the lungs in the first place. If neonics do not belong to the environment, then it is not used, or if used, it is banned. (Banned = failed "sound", and "backed", and "quantified", and "peer reviewed", and "real", and "science")

If you wish to poison, the alternative's are either one poison or the another poison. If you do not wish to poison, then alternatives do not exist. (idle)

Norah G Fon Harold • 12 minutes agoHold on, this is waiting to be approved by The Western Producer.

Responding to Harold --- Really ?!?! Cigarettes ?!?! Cigarettes are your best explanation of this corrupt politicized situation ?!?! Any comparison of cigarettes to pest control products is PITIFULLY RIDICULOUS, as well as LAUGHABLY OBTUSE ! Cigarettes have NOTHING IN COMMON with conventional pest control products. Pesticide-Hating Fanatics use this NONSENSICAL COMPARISON purely as a means of COERCING and INFLUENCING the public into believing that it is necessary to PROHIBIT pest control products, despite the fact that they are GOVERNMENT-APPROVED, FEDERALLY-REGULATED, SCIENTIFICALLY-SAFE, PRACTICALLY-NON-TOXIC, and CAUSE NO HARM. There is NO

FEDERAL REGISTRATION of tobacco products. By comparison, there ARE agencies that REGULATE pest control products — EPA and Health Canada. There is NO agency that regulates tobacco, except perhaps for restricting access to young people. By comparison, there ARE agencies that REGULATE pest control products — such as EPA and Health Canada. Moreover, cigarettes are ABOVE THE LAW because our governments have chosen to shield them from the regulatory process. This is NOT the case with pest control products. Our governments have chosen to HEAVILY REGULATE pest control products. Pest control products are STRINGENTLY TESTED and REGULATED in order to ensure that they are SCIENTIFICALLY SAFE and CAUSE NO HARM.

<http://pesticidetruths.com/wp-...>

Get the latest details at <http://pesticidetruths.com/> WILLIAM H GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G

richard • 5 days ago

....as if the licensing of these systemic persistent neurotoxins wasn't political ? Please.... it's all political.....stop pretending to hide behind the politics of "science" Mr Sibley..... Your assertion of habitat loss and excessive nutrients is only further evidence of the broken paradigm you are attempting to defend.....as if existing stupidity somehow validates more of the same ?

Norah G Fon richard • a few seconds ago Hold on, this is waiting to be approved by The Western Producer.

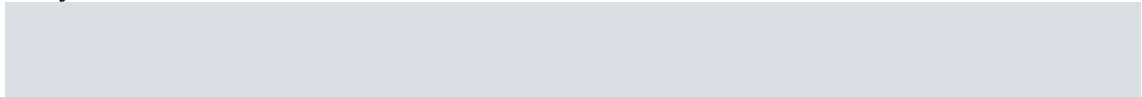
These systemic insecticides actually penetrate into the plant tissues where they remain inaccessible to bees. Bees DO NOT consume plant tissues, and, therefore, are NOT harmed by Neonicotinoid Insecticides. And really !?! Neurotoxins !?! Persistent !?! Your expanding vocabulary is hardly science-based ! Besides, bee-keepers themselves kill more bees than anyone, or anything, else ! THE REAL CULPRITS WHO ARE HARMING BEES ARE ACTUALLY THE BEE-KEEPERS THEMSELVES, AND NOT INSECTICIDES ! Seemingly, bee-keepers are losing their bees over and over again. Why is this madness happening !?! Observers have concluded that many bee-keepers have no idea what they are doing, and are simply not skilled to raise bees. Bee-keepers are killing their own bees over and over again. The alleged losses of bees are, in fact, the fault of these bee-keepers and their mis-management practices. The bee-keepers themselves are clearly responsible since they appear to be unable or unwilling or not skilled enough to mitigate the real issues that harm bees, such as starvation, transportation, weak colonies, fungal infections, and mite infestations. STARVATION is the biggest single cause of bee losses ! For example, in jurisdictions like Ontario, during winter, bee-keepers are KILLING THEIR OWN BEES BY STARVATION, followed by WEAK COLONIES IN THE FALL, and POOR QUEENS. <http://wp.me/p1jq40-97E> Additionally, bee-keepers are killing even more of their bees by TRUCK ACCIDENTS ! <http://wp.me/p1jq40-8RT> Bee-keepers are not just starving their bees to death, they are also KILLING THEIR OWN BEES WITH INEPT TRANSPORTATION. 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. Why are only a very limited number of bee-keepers affected !?! Why don't government inspectors and specialists investigate the killing of bees by bee-keepers !?! Bee-keepers prefer to remain

unproficient at bee-keeping, and expect the government to shower them with vast sums of unjustifiable compensation. <http://tinyurl.com/l8odbpc> <http://wp.me/p1jq40-77N><http://wp.me/p1jq40-7VI>



lazylarry • 6 days ago

it's called saving the environment, you won't be able to grow squat if you kill the bees and the environment, yes ban them all



Norah G Fon lazylarry • 11 minutes ago Hold on, this is waiting to be approved by The Western Producer.
Response --- Yipper. Lazy Larry with his LAZY solutions ! :-)

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