



Quebec grain producers angered over potential pesticide regulation



Of the pesticides that would be banned, three belong to the family of neonicotinoids, which are associated with the decline of bee colonies. (Photo by Marc Di Luzio/ Flickr)

Grain producers are not digesting the concept of pesticide regulation announced on Wednesday as part of the Quebec Pesticide Strategy 2015-2018.

The government intends to prohibit the use of five pesticides for agricultural purposes unless it is justified in advance by an agrologist.

A draft of the regulations was published in the Gazette Officielle du Québec on July 19.

The restrictions may be enforced within 45 days following the date of publication.

Of the pesticides that would be banned, three belong to the family of neonicotinoids, which are associated with the decline of bee colonies.

According to these grain farmers, the measures announced will significantly increase production costs and that the impending measures make up for only a fraction of the negative impact on production.

In a written statement to The Canadian Press, Christian Overbeek-- President of Quebec Grain Growers-- argued that eliminating the main pesticides currently in use may mean a yield reduction of more than 5 per cent.

The association estimates that this decline in productivity will amount to several tens of millions of dollars annually.

Added to this is the cost of agronomists and record-keeping of pesticides that the government-commissioned impact assessment estimates will total \$ 8.5 million per year.

The last budget announced by Quebec officials provides \$3 million a year in funding, which grain producers call a "*slap in the face*."

They also claim that the ban on pesticides in Europe has led to increased use of other pesticides and increased presence of pests.

Grain producers will be making their case at government consultations that will begin next week.