

Quebec places new restrictions on pesticides in bid to protect honeybees

Neonicotinoids are commonly used by farmers to help keep crops free of pests

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 19, 2018 1:05 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 19, 2018 2:25 PM ET

Quebec is introducing new restrictions on pesticides considered harmful to honeybees.

Under the changes, farmers will have to get permission from a certified agronomist before using certain pesticides on crops.

The restricted pesticides include three types of neonicotinoids, as well as chlorpyrifos and atrazine, which has been banned in Europe for more than a decade.

Neonicotinoids, also known as neonics, are nicotine-based pesticides commonly used by farmers to help keep everything from field crops to fruit orchards free of pests like aphids, spider mites and stink bugs.

Isabelle Melançon, the sustainable development minister, made the announcement Monday.

In a statement, she said the new measures strike a balance between the needs of farmers and environmental concerns.

Representatives from the David Suzuki Foundation and Equiterre, two environment groups that have long pressed for stricter controls, were on hand for the announcement in Quebec City.

- [New limits, but no all-out ban on pesticides that harm bee population](#)
- [No doubt that neonicotinoids are killing birds, bees, scientists say](#)

Some Quebec farmers have expressed concern about what a crackdown on pesticides will mean for crop yields.

Bees, earth worms and aquatic life affected

Ontario [put in place restrictions on neonics](#) in 2014 in attempt to curb bee deaths in the province. Montreal has also [banned neonicotinoids](#).

There is a growing body of evidence linking the pesticides with the declining bee population.

Last September, the International Union for Conservation of Nature updated a 2015 report on neonicotinoids, which said a review of more than 1,110 peer-reviewed research studies showed there was no doubt that flying through chemical-laden clouds of dust from neonic-treated farm fields is killing bees.

The report said neonics were also having a major impact on other invertebrates such as earth worms, and aquatic life. Health Canada is studying the aquatic impact of neonics separately.

Research suggest neonics can affect reproduction, growth and movement for these species, as well as make them more susceptible to disease.

Honey bees are responsible for pollinating about one-third of the world's crops and all wild plants, and the loss of large populations of bees could affect the world's food supply.

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