



## NEWS LOCAL

# Ontario and Quebec beekeepers want commonly used pesticide banned



By Debora Van Brenk, The London Free Press  
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(REUTERS)

Beekeepers in Ontario and Quebec are calling for a ban on a commonly used pesticide they believe is killing their bees.

Europe has already suspended the use of neonicotinoids, which are almost universally applied to the seeds of field crops to control insect pests.

Hives in Ontario and Quebec are being decimated, say apiarists, who pin the long-term losses on the acute and cumulative effects of the pesticides.

Beekeepers in both provinces experienced heavy losses this spring and in 2012.

They reported finding dead bees by the handful at the entrances to their hives. Tested for chemicals, many bees were found to have levels of the pesticides.

Other bees simply didn't return to the hives. Keepers suggesting that they may have lost their ability to navigate back home.

"Our industry cannot sustain these losses. Reduced numbers of pollinators also threaten the viability of our local fruit and vegetable supply," Watford-area apiarist Dan Davidson, president of the Ontario Beekeepers Association, said in a statement.

Many of the losses took place after spring planting, leading several agencies to suggest to farmers that they amend how they plant seed to make sure no dust comes off the seed into the air or soil surface.

Now the Ontario and Quebec beekeepers associations are calling on their agriculture and environment ministers to suspend the use of neonics and to do so before next planting season.

European countries won't be able to use the pesticide for two years, following a decision there last April.

The federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency noted in their report on bee deaths from Spring, 2012 that seeds treated with neonics "contributed to the majority of the bee mortalities that occurred in corn growing regions of Ontario and Quebec in Spring 2012."

Léo Buteau, president, of Quebec apiarists, the Fédération des apiculteurs du Québec, said, "It is time to stop poisoning our bees, our water and our soil."

The two groups hope the issue will be discussed during high-level agriculture ministers' conference later this month.

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Any prohibition of pest control products is not necessary. Between April and June 2012, Health Canada received a small number of reports of bee losses from across southern Ontario, involving a mere 40 bee-keepers, as well as 1 report. At present there are 2,900 bee-keepers in Ontario, therefore, the affected bee-keepers represent less than 1.5 per cent of all bee-keepers in Ontario. The information evaluated to date suggests that insecticides used on treated corn seeds contributed to many of the bee losses. Health Canada has issued a document entitled

