

**Ministry of Agriculture
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July 18, 2013

Mr. Léo Buteau
President
Fédération des apiculteurs du Québec
apiculteur@upa.qc.ca

Mr. Dan Davidson
President
Ontario Beekeepers' Association
sddavidson@brktel.on.ca

Dear Messrs:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concerns regarding the potential impact of neonicotinoid pesticides on bee health.

Ontario's new government recognizes the vitally important role that pollinators and beekeepers play in maintaining a healthy and productive agri-food sector. We want to assure you that we are aware that bee mortality incidents have been observed by beekeepers this spring and that, like you, we are concerned about potential links between these incidents with pesticide use. The province will be guided by science on this matter.

We appreciate your concerns about the losses of honey bees in 2012 and of continued reports of honey bee mortalities this spring. Furthermore, we understand the important role you have in representing beekeepers and in advocating on their behalf to protect honey bees in Ontario and Quebec.

Due to the urgent nature of this matter, a letter has been sent to both the Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health Canada, urging them to expedite the review currently being undertaken by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. We are pleased that this letter received all-party support, with both agriculture critics adding their signatures.

This spring, both federal and provincial governments have continued to respond to bee mortality incidents. Staff has collected further information and taken samples of dead bees for analysis. These findings will inform measures to protect bees and to support Ontario and Quebec's beekeepers.

Additional funding of up to \$80,000 will be made available to the Ontario Beekeepers' Association to conduct further research.

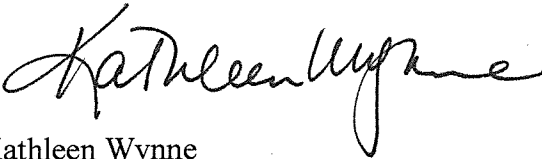
The Ministry of Agriculture and Food is also establishing a multi-stakeholder working group, with all interested parties, including the Ontario Beekeepers' Association, to collectively discuss a potential path forward. The working group will use the best available research to provide the government with advice and make recommendations on how to mitigate the potential risk to honey bees from exposure to neonicotinoid seed treatment on corn and soybeans in time for next year's critical planting season.

In determining the path forward, we are also working closely with our colleagues with the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. To continue the momentum, Ontario and Quebec will be working together to raise this important matter at the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Agriculture meeting that is scheduled to take place in Halifax in mid-July.

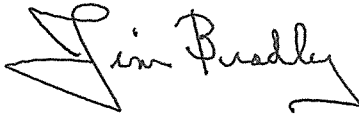
We look forward to continuing to work closely with you on the initiatives outlined above.

Once again, thank you for bringing your concerns to the attention of the government.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Minister of Agriculture and Food



Jim Bradley
Minister of the Environment

c: The Honourable François Gendron,
Minister of Agriculture, Pêcheries et Alimentation Québec

Hon Yves-François Blanchet
Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment, Wildlife and Parks