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## OBA Cautious about CropLife Canada's Bee App

**MILTON, ON.** The Ontario Beekeepers' Association cautions beekeepers in the province not to assume CropLife Canada's Bee Connected 'app' would prevent bees from being "unintentionally exposed to pesticides" as claimed.

CropLife Canada is the lobby group representing manufacturers and distributors of the widely used neonicotinoids that have been implicated in the decline of Ontario bee colonies and are currently the subject of a moratorium in Europe. CropLife would like beekeepers to believe that this app offers bees protection by allowing farmers to alert beekeepers to the application of this systemic pesticide.

Bees regularly forage as far as 5 km from the hive. With persistent, water-soluble systemics like neonicotinoids, it is impossible for beekeepers to avoid all the various routes of exposure. These include dust from seed abrasion at planting, collection of contaminated pollen and nectar or translocation to other flowering plants through ground water, which can happen days, weeks or months after the application.

"We're cautioning against an app that could create a false sense of security. Farmers need to understand the significant risks that these neurotoxic pesticides pose to our valuable pollinators, especially wild bees who have no way to avoid exposure," says Tibor Szabo, OBA president. "The best option is for farmers to stop using these pesticides to prevent pests that might not even exist on their soils. This practice only helps pesticide manufacturers sell more product."

The decline in population of wild and managed bees in Ontario is tied to the widespread use of neonicotinoids on corn, soy and winter wheat. Claims for bee kills in Ontario due to the application of neonicotinoids have been confirmed by Health Canada for both 2012 and 2013. In spring of 2015, Ontario reported 38% overwinter losses, over three times the average of all other Canadian provinces. In July 2015, the Province of Ontario passed regulations intended to reduce the acreage use of neonicotinoid pesticides by 80% by 2017.

"There is overwhelming science pointing to the overuse of neonicotinoid pesticides on corn and soy as the central issue for pollinator health in Ontario," says Szabo, "We would like to see more effort placed on better farming practices rather than an app that will do little to solve the larger problem."

OBA also cautions its members who use this app to ensure their privacy is protected in the registration process.

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