



ONTARIO BEEKEEPERS'
ASSOCIATION
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Beekeepers support Ontario's commitment to reduce neonicotinoid pesticide use by 80%

Milton, ON. The Ontario Beekeepers' Association (OBA) supports today's announcement by the Government of Ontario, which commits to an 80% reduction in the number of acres planted with neonicotinoid treated corn and soybean seed by 2017. "Today the government has shown bold leadership, unique in North America, in moving decisively and measurably to significantly limit the use of these toxic chemicals," says Tibor Szabo, President of the OBA. "The OBA appreciates the government's recognition that the prophylactic use of neonicotinoid-coated seed on Ontario's corn and soy crops is unwarranted and unacceptable."

The acute decline in population of 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 2014, Ontario reported 58% overwinter losses, over three times the average of all other Canadian provinces. "The Province's goal to reduce the over-winter honey bee mortality rate to 15% by 2020 will bring the industry back to the pre-neonicotinoid average winter loss and will support a thriving, sustainable beekeeping industry going forward."

"There is overwhelming science pointing to the overuse of neonicotinoid pesticides as the central issue for bee health," says Szabo, "The widespread use of seed treatments on vast acreages of field crops has not only put the health of critical pollinators at risk, it has also discouraged farmers from using more pollinator friendly practices like Integrated Pest Management. We look forward to working with farmers and farm organizations toward achieving these goals to the benefit of agriculture, bees and the environment."

The Ontario Beekeepers' Association represents the interest of the approximately 3100 beekeepers in Ontario managing over 100,000 hives.

For background information: Julie White, Chair, Communications Committee
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For interview: OBA President, Tibor Szabo at 519.836.5617 or 519.221.4077

For information on the Ontario Governments position on neonicotinoid pesticides:
<https://contrib.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/pollinator-health>

For the Government's discussion paper and opportunity to comment:
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/pollinator/discuss-paper.pdf>