



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ontario beekeepers call for the suspension of neonicotinoid pesticides

Milton, Ontario, May 3, 2013: The Ontario Beekeepers' Association (OBA), congratulates the EU on Monday's decision to ban the use of three neonicotinoid pesticides (clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiametoxam) that have been tied to the devastation of thousands of bee colonies in the province.

'The EU vote clearly shows there is scientific and public support around the globe for policies which protect honey bees and other pollinators and recognize their essential role in food production and healthy ecosystems,' said Dan Davidson, President of the OBA.

In 2012, Ontario experienced widespread losses of more than 5,000 colonies in various locations throughout the Province. At the time of the poisonings, Ontario beekeepers suspected that the neonicotinoid insecticides used in corn seed treatment were the cause of both bee kills and the decline of colonies near corn and soybean plantings.

The federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently confirmed those fears in their report "Evaluation of Canadian Bee Mortalities that coincided with Corn Planting in Spring 2012": *"The information evaluated suggests that planting of corn seeds treated with the nitroguanidine insecticides clothianidin and/or thiamethoxam contributed to the majority of the bee mortalities that occurred in corn growing regions of Ontario and Quebec in Spring 2012."*

The OBA believes that the health of Ontario's food production system is at stake. "Ontario's fruit and vegetable farmers depend on adequate pollination by honey bees, bumble bees and wild bees. We encourage the Government of Ontario to reassess the bee safety of all neonicotinoid pesticides products and suspend all conditional registrations until we understand how to manage the risks posed by these products to honey bees and other pollinators," says Davidson.

Neonicotinoids are systemic pesticides that are absorbed into plant tissues. They are highly soluble in water and will leach into our ground water supply and contaminate the soil. They are routinely applied to corn and soybeans and a variety of agricultural crops with sprays, seed coatings, soil drenches and granules. Neonicotinoids are highly toxic to bees. They migrate through soil and the entire plant all the way to the flowers. This causes toxic, lethal and chronic exposure to multiple species, including pollinators, earthworms, birds and fish.

Since 1881 the Ontario Beekeepers Association has represented the interests of Ontario beekeepers. We work to ensure a thriving and sustainable beekeeping industry in Ontario. To this end, we advocate for beekeepers' interests, support honey bee health research and deliver practical training and information. For more information: www.ontariobee.com

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