



ONTARIO BECOMES THE FIRST PROVINCE TO ACT ON NEONICOTINOIDS

July 8, 2014. Milton, Ontario. The government of Ontario has announced their intention to restrict the use of neonicotinoids by requiring farmers and other commercial growers to apply for permits to plant seeds treated with neonicotinoid insecticides. For years, pesticide companies have benefitted from the practice of applying insecticide as a preventative to the extent that almost 100% of Ontario's corn seed is now treated with neonicotinoids despite crop experts' advice that only 10– 20% of corn acreage actually needs the insecticide.

Earlier this year, the OBA and the National Farmers Union (NFU) called for action to end the indiscriminate use of neonicotinoids with a policy option that included the moratorium on the sale of treated seed and the possibility of farmers applying to have their seed treated if they could demonstrate the need for neonicotinoids.

“Bayer and Syngenta have built a \$2.6 billion business by promoting the improper use of this insecticide as a preventative,” said Dan Davidson, OBA president. “The only way to stop the cycle of overuse is to ban the sale of neonicotinoid treated seed.”

Over 4.2 million acres in Ontario were planted with neonicotinoid treated seed last year. With this amount of coverage, beekeepers cannot move their bees out of harm's way. The result is the horrific bee kills experienced in 2012 and 2013, the devastating overwinter losses experienced by Ontario beekeepers last winter and the slow build up of colonies this spring. Many beekeepers feel that both these issues are a direct effect of neonicotinoid exposure weakening colonies.

“While we'd like to see all uses of neonicotinoids banned, it's important that Ontario move ahead quickly with the implementation of these restrictions,” said Tibor Szabo, OBA Vice-President and Ontario queen breeder. “Bees and beekeepers continue to suffer. Restricting the use of neonicotinoids will give us some relief.”

While the EU banned the use of neonicotinoids in December of 2013, Ontario will be the first North American state or province to take this kind of action. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), the Government of Canada's pesticide regulatory agency, is currently reviewing the registration of neonicotinoids in Canada. However they have stated that their review may not be completed until 2018. In the US, the EPA is on a similar track as Canada with no action likely before 2016.

The Ontario Beekeepers' Association has been representing the interests of Ontario beekeepers since 1881.

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