



MEDIA RELEASE

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PESTICIDE MANUFACTURERS GET AN EARLY CHRISTMAS PRESENT FROM HEALTH CANADA

In announcing their *Proposed Pollinator Decisions* yesterday, Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) opted against bees in favour of pesticide manufacturers.

PMRA intends to continue registration of two widely-used neonicotinoids, stating that the current risk to bees from seed application of Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam on corn and soy is acceptable. PMRA's decision goes against overwhelming scientific evidence showing acute and chronic effects on bees, and the experience of Ontario beekeepers whose bees continue to suffer from a decade of overuse of neonicotinoids on soy, corn and winter wheat.

"Ontario beekeepers are suffering declining honey production, higher queen losses and continued unacceptable winter and spring losses," says OBA president, Jim Coneybeare. "In Ontario we are still seeing dead or dying, twitching bees in front of our hives. Allowing the loss of pollinators from pesticide exposure to continue is unacceptable."

The two neonicotinoids in question, Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam, have been applied as seed treatments on as much as 99% of corn and 65% of soy planted in Ontario. As neurotoxins, they are 8,000 – 10,000 times more lethal to bees than DDT. Hundreds of independent scientific studies have linked neonicotinoids to pollinator declines in Europe, Canada and North America¹. In 2015, the Ontario government determined that only 15 – 20% of crop acreage required pest protection using neonicotinoid seed treatments and initiated legislation to limit access to pesticide-treated seed only to farmers who can demonstrate they need protection from the pests targeted by this pesticide.

PMRA has proposed cancelling registrations on some uses of neonicotinoids in food and ornamental crops but has only asked for new labelling on seed treatments related to reducing dust at planting. However, dust from planters represents less than 5% of the pesticide applied to seed and ignores the risk to bees when this persistent pesticide trans-locates via surface and ground water to neighbouring flowering plants, bushes and trees. Neonicotinoids have also been associated with the loss of aquatic invertebrates causing PMRA earlier this year to announce a ban on a third neonicotinoid, Imidacloprid. By calling attention to crop dust, PMRA perpetuates the myth that neonicotinoids could be safe for bees if applied properly at planting time.

"Ontario beekeepers are hopeful that Ontario's Class 12 legislation will allow farmers access to crop protection in a way that also protects our vital insect pollinators," says Coneybeare. "The only group that could possibly benefit from PMRA's decision are the manufacturers of these pesticides."

Since 1881, the Ontario Beekeepers' Association has represented the interests of Ontario beekeepers. With over 3,100 registered beekeepers, Ontario is home to Canada's largest number of beekeepers. Through research, knowledge transfer and continuous education of beekeepers, the OBA aims to increase the health of both honey bees and wild pollinators while sustaining a viable beekeeping industry.

See PMRA's [Consultations on the Neonicotinoid Pesticides – Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam: Proposed Pollinator Decisions](#)

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ⁱ [Scientists say no longer any doubt about impact of pesticides on bees](#)