

Stop Honey Bee Carnage Say Eight Out Of Ten Ontarians

Respondents agree that bees are crucial to Ontario's agriculture sector

(Ottawa, ON, November 7, 2014) A new public opinion poll released today finds that more than eight out of every ten people in Ontario support a ban on pesticides linked by scientists to bee deaths.

Friends of the Earth Canada (FOE) commissioned the poll to discover whether or not Ontarians were concerned about Neonicotinoids (neonics) and their effect on the steadily declining bee populations in the province.

Bees can be exposed to neonics (a deadly pesticide) by several routes: contact with contaminated dust, consuming pollen or nectar from the treated crop, adjacent flowers, and fields or consuming water (puddles, surface water and guttation fluid).

FOE released the poll results just days before Premier Wynne is scheduled to receive the report on options to act from her Bee Health Working Group.

The poll demonstrated that:

- Eight out of ten Ontarians (79%) believe honey bees are important to agriculture in Ontario.
- More than eight out of ten (82%) support the suspension of neonics in order to protect bees.
- More than eight out of ten (84%) support a suspension of neonics to mirror the European Union action.
- More than eight out of ten (82%) want the federal Minister of Health to act to suspend neonics.
- Failing action by the federal government, eight out of ten Ontarians (78%) would support suspension of neonics by Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Premier Wynne.

"Clearly, Ontario residents want to stop the bee carnage," says Beatrice Olivastri, CEO, Friends of the Earth Canada. "The federal Minister of Health, Rona Ambrose, has the power to immediately de-register neonics. And she should. But if not, Ontario's Minister of Agriculture can suspend use of these pesticides in Ontario. Time is running out for action to save the honey bees before the spring 2014 planting season. We need to follow the example of The European Union's two year ban on neonics that commences next month," concluded Olivastri.

"Every week I hear from beekeepers, some second and third generation like myself, who tell me they cannot continue to sustain the losses they have seen over the last few years" said Dan Davidson, President of the Ontario Beekeepers' Association. "It is clear from these results that the people of Ontario agree. Our government needs to respond and take the prudent step to suspend neonicotinoid pesticides to protect bees and other pollinators."

Neonics are synthetic versions of nicotine, and are neurotoxins that kill insects by breaking down their nervous system. The class includes clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam and associated products registered in Canada. In Ontario 100% of seed corn was coated with neonics.

The Oracle Research survey was commissioned by Friends of the Earth and conducted between October 16 and 21, 2013. A total of 1,000 people in Ontario were surveyed with a margin of error of +/- 3.1% 19/20 times. For more details, visit FOE's website at www.foecanada.org.

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