



Who Is Responsible For Wild Bees in Canada?

August 16, 2016 (Ottawa) Friends of the Earth Canada says Canada urgently needs a study of the impact of neonicotinoid pesticides used on canola crops in light of a new [study](#) out of Britain. The study links neonicotinoid pesticide use on canola crops to large scale, long term declines in wild bee species. Canada is the largest producer of canola in the world.

“This UK study shows it’s time to light a fire under the Canadian government to support scientists to do a similar analysis for canola and all crops using neonic seed treatment,” says Beatrice Olivastri, CEO, Friends of the Earth Canada. “We call on Minister McKenna, who is responsible for wild bees in Canada, to ensure that funding is available for independent scientists to conduct a comparable study. In the meantime, Friends of the Earth continues to call for a ban on the use of neonicotinoids in Canada.”

The UK study found that on average wild bees foraging on oilseed rape (canola) were three times more negatively affected by exposure to neonicotinoids than bees foraging on other floral resources.

“We know that wild, native bees are critical pollinators in Canada and we know that several formerly common wild bees are in decline. What we don’t know is how much of the decline can be laid at the feet of neonicotinoid seed treatments for canola, sunflowers, corn, soy and more crops,” says John Bennett, Senior Advisor, Friends of the Earth Canada.

The authors of the UK study say their results “provide the first evidence that sub-lethal impacts of neonicotinoid pesticide exposure can be linked to large-scale population extinctions of wild bee species, with these effects being strongest for species that are known to forage on canola crops.”

Friends of the Earth England Wales and Northern Ireland nature campaigner, Paul de Zylva, says: “This is the strongest ever evidence of harm to bees from neonicotinoid pesticides in British fields. The study uses data from real field conditions over 17 years and adds a huge new peak to the existing mountain of evidence showing the risk these chemicals pose to our bees.”

Friends of the Earth Canada just completed the [The Great Canadian Bumble Count](#) in collaboration with BumbleBeeWatch, a citizen scientist project to help scientists protect the wild bee population across Canada.

Canada's Canola Council says 43,000 farmer decision-makers grow canola, mostly in the western provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec.

Woodcock, B.A., Isaac, N.J.B., Bullock, J.M., Roy, D.B. & Garthwaite, D.G. 2016. Impacts of neonicotinoid use on long-term population changes in wild bees in England. *Nature Communications*, [DOI: 10.1038/NCOMMS12459](https://doi.org/10.1038/NCOMMS12459)

For further information, call:

Beatrice Olivastri, CEO, Friends of the Earth Canada 613 724 8690 beatrice@foecanada.org

John Bennett, Senior Advisor, Friends of the Earth Canada 613 291 6888

johnbennett@foecanada.org

Paul de Zylva paul.dezylva@foe.co.uk