



## NFU calls for precaution and independent research in neonicotinoid review

(December 17, 2013, St. Marys, ON) - The National Farmers Union (NFU) is calling for a precautionary five-year moratorium on the use of the neonicotinoid seed treatments for field crops and for independent research to be done. Such a moratorium would provide time to study the impacts of neonicotinoid insecticides on pollinators and the broader agricultural and natural ecosystems and to fully explore alternatives, including non-chemical alternatives. The NFU's request was made in a submission to Health Canada's Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency's (PMRA) consultation earlier this month. The NFU's input to the PMRA is based on a resolution passed at its recent National Convention in Ottawa.

Grey County farmer and NFU Grey Local 344 Director, Nathan Carey said, "As farmers, NFU members are committed to working with nature to produce healthy food and to protect and enhance biodiversity within and around our farms. We do not believe that the measures proposed by PMRA are adequate to protect bees or other wild pollinators from lethal and sub-lethal exposure to neonicotinoid pesticides."

Carey noted, "The PMRA itself concluded that current agricultural practices related to the use of neonicotinoid-treated corn and soybean seed are not sustainable following their review of pollinator mortalities in 2012 and 2013. The NFU recognizes that bee health is complex and other chemicals and management practices may also contribute to problems. In calling for a five-year moratorium on the use of neonicotinoid seed treatments for field crops, the NFU is recommending that the PMRA invoke the precautionary principle, which calls on public authorities to prevent irreversible harm when it is within their power to do so, even when scientific certainty is incomplete."

St. Marys area farmer and NFU Vice President of Policy, Ann Slater, said, "The protective measures proposed by the PMRA, such as enhanced labelling, appear to be another instance of our federal government acting in the interest of agro-chemical and seed companies, rather than in the interest of Canadians and our environment. This is in line with the government's recent introduction of Bill C-18, the *Agricultural Growth Act*, which if passed, would allow Canadian regulators to use foreign studies rather than independent, Canadian-based research when approving new agricultural products."

The NFU wrapped up its submission with a recommendation to conduct publicly funded, independent third-party research during the five-year moratorium. "Such research would generate data and analysis to allow the PMRA to make sound, science-based decisions regarding the effect of neonicotinoid seed treatments on pollinators and the ecosystem. In addition, this transparency would provide Canadians with some level of assurance that decisions are made to protect the public rather than private interests," Carey concluded.

- 30 -

For more information contact:

Nathan Carey, NFU member and Grey Local 344 Director: Tel. (519) 665-7305; Email [nathanjcarey@gmail.com](mailto:nathanjcarey@gmail.com) (<mailto:nathanjcarey@gmail.com>)

Ann Slater, NFU Vice-President of Policy Tel. (519) 349-2448; Email [aslater@quadro.net](mailto:aslater@quadro.net) (<mailto:aslater@quadro.net>)

**[NFU Submission - Action to Protect Bees from Exposure to Neonicotinoid Pesticides](http://www.nfu.ca/story/nfu-submission-action-protect-bees-exposure-neonicotinoid-pesticides)**  
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