

From: "5.1.2.e (5.1.2.e)"
Sent: Fri, 28 Sep 2012 13:16:35 +0100
To: "5.1.2.e (5.1.2.e)" <5.1.2.e>
Cc: "5.1.2.e (5.1.2.e)" <5.1.2.e>
Subject: FW: FYI - DEFRA - Neonicotinoid insecticides and bees - official assessment of Science studies - position established
Attachments: Neonicotinoid Insecticides and Bees.pdf, Henry_eta-_sept2012.pdf, cresswell_thompson_sept2012.pdf
Importance: High

Hoi 5.1.2.e

Ter info, DEFRA analyse neonics. Wellicht heb je deze al via een andere route ontvangen maar beter 2x dan niet...

Hierbij ook de artikelen Henry et al en Cresswell en Thompson (zie mail 5.1.2.e over QA AO).

Groetjes 5.1.2.e

Neonicotinoids are a group of chemicals used as insecticides. Studies looking at the effects of neonicotinoids on bees have been widely reported.

The Government is fully aware of the importance of bees and of the economic benefits they bring as pollinators. Defra supports beekeepers by:

- Helping them look after their hives to reduce pest and disease risks;
- working in partnership with beekeeping groups on a ten year plan to protect and improve the health of honeybees in England and Wales; and
- funding research on pest and disease management to help achieve a sustainable and thriving population of honey bees for pollination and honey production.

We take any threat to bees very seriously and have kept the evidence on neonicotinoids under close and open-minded scrutiny. We are prepared to take whatever action the evidence shows to be necessary.

Regulating pesticides

All pesticides, including neonicotinoids, are tightly regulated. The risk assessment process, set out in European legislation, looks in detail at the risks to honey bees, considering a range of factors including methods of application and examining both lethal and sub-lethal effects.

The regulatory process is constantly updated so that it advances with scientific knowledge and the authorisations of pesticide chemicals are reviewed regularly to ensure that they meet the latest standards. Those authorisations that do not are restricted or withdrawn.

The neonicotinoid insecticides meet the standards set by the regulatory system and suitable legal restrictions are in place to ensure that bees are not exposed to excessive doses.

- A statutory [Code of Practice](#) also provides guidance to pesticide users on minimising the exposure of bees.

Reviewing the evidence

We recognise the importance of considering all the available evidence. We carefully assess new studies as they emerge and consider how they alter the overall picture. Several new studies were published in Spring 2012, suggesting that low doses of neonicotinoids could have sub-lethal effects on bees with consequences for bee populations. In particular, two studies were published in Science Express on 29 March:

- Henry *et al* “A common pesticide decreases foraging success and survival in honey bees”; and
- Whitehorn *et al* “Neonicotinoid pesticide reduces bumble bee colony growth and queen production”.

These recent studies and existing evidence have been assessed by: the [Chemicals Regulation Directorate of HSE](#); bee experts in Defra’s [Food and Environment Research Agency \(Fera\)](#); Defra’s [Science Advisory Council](#); and the independent expert [Advisory Committee on Pesticides](#).

- Read a document [summarising the evidence and the experts’ assessment](#)

Defra has considered these assessments – alongside parallel work by the [European Food Safety Authority](#) – and has found that:

- The studies were interesting but they either used neonicotinoids at a higher level than is currently permitted, or the studies weren’t carried out under field conditions. The studies did not show that currently permitted uses of neonicotinoids have serious implications for the health of bee populations.
- Regulation needs to be based on all the science. Existing field studies on neonicotinoids found there weren’t any significant differences between hives exposed to treated crops and hives exposed to untreated crops.

What we are now doing

Based on the expert findings, Defra has concluded that:

- It is appropriate to update the process for assessing the risks of pesticides to bees in the light of scientific developments – including the latest research. This should include the development of a new risk assessment for bumble bees and solitary bees, alongside an updated risk assessment for honey bees. This work is being taken forward in Europe and UK experts are actively involved. The aim is to complete this highly complex task by the end of 2012.
- Further research will be carried out to fill gaps in our knowledge, including the questions raised about the relevance of the recent studies to field conditions. The Government has already put new research in place to explore further the [impacts of neonicotinoids on bumble bees in field conditions](#) and to [understand what levels of pesticide residues and disease in honey bees are normal](#). This work is due to finish in Spring 2013.
- The recent studies do not justify changing existing regulation. However, the research that we have put in hand and the on-going work in Europe to develop the risk assessment could change the picture and it is always possible that further new evidence may emerge. As our knowledge develops, we will continue to consider the need for further research and for any changes to the regulation of neonicotinoids.

Full link: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/chemicals/pesticides/insecticides-bees/>