

**Education and Health  
Ontario Provincial Council**

**2015.03      Banning the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides**

**Whereas,** Neonicotinoid pesticides are increasingly found in the ecosystem, posing a risk to pollinators, birds and invertebrates; and

**Whereas,** Neonicotinoid pesticides, widely used in Canadian agriculture and horticulture, are a class of neuro-active, nicotine-based insecticides; therefore, be it

**Resolved,** That national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, in 95<sup>th</sup> annual national convention assembled, urge the federal government to ban the use of neonicotinoid pesticides; and be it further

**Resolved,** That this resolution be forwarded through the national executive to the other ten provincial councils, encouraging them to become aware of this issue as it pertains to their province/territory, and to act on it, as deemed necessary/prudent.

## **BRIEF:        Banning the Use Of Neonicotinoid Pesticides**

Neonicotinoid pesticides were originally introduced in 1995 to control the Colorado potato beetle (Leahy). “They are now the most widely used insecticides in the world” (Miller). “As a result of their extensive use, these substances are found in all environmental media including soil, water and air. Environmental contamination occurs via a number of disparate routes including dust generated during the drilling of dressed seeds; contamination and build-up of environmental concentrations after repeated application in arable soils and soil water; run-off into surface and ground waters; uptake of pesticides by non-target plants via their roots followed by translocation to pollen, nectar, guttation fluids, etc.; dust and spray drift deposition on leaves; and wind- and animal-mediated dispersal of contaminated pollen and nectar from treated plants” (van de Sluijs et al). In recent years, parts of Canada have seen large-scale honey bee deaths, as well as declines in other pollinators, which research has linked to exposure to neonicotinoid pesticides (Miller). “Wild pollinators, including bees and other invertebrates (e.g., moths, flies, wasps, beetles, butterflies), as well as vertebrate pollinators (e.g., birds, bats), have a key function in the fertilization of both crops and non-crop flowering plants” (Miller). Health Canada’s Pest Management Regulatory Agency report concluded “that neonicotinoids present in dust generated during planting of treated corn and soybean seeds contributed to the reported bee mortalities in 2012 and 2013.”

“Most crops grown in Canada and the US contain neonicotinoids” (Leahy). “Neonicotinoids are used as seed treatments on more than 140 crops with virtually all corn, and a large percentage of soy, wheat, and canola seed planted in the US being pretreated with neonicotinoids” (BeeCauseCanada). In Canada, “neonicotinoid pesticides are approved for use as seed treatments, soil applications, and foliar sprays on a wide variety of agricultural crops such as oilseeds, grains, pulse crops (for example, peas and beans), fruits, vegetables, greenhouse crops (food and ornamental), ornamental plants, and Christmas trees. They also have approved uses on turf, as a tree injection, in structures and outdoor residential areas, and as pet care products” (Health Canada).

Neonicotinoid pesticides, widely used in Canadian agriculture and horticulture, are a class of neuro-active, nicotine-based insecticides. “Neonicotinoids and fipronil operate by disrupting neural transmissions in the central nervous system of organisms” (Van der Sluijs et al). “Due to their systemic nature, neonicotinoids and to a lesser extent, fipronil as well as several of their toxic metabolites are taken up by the root or leaves and translocated to all part of the plant, which in turn, makes the treated plant effectively toxic to insects that are known to have the potential to cause crop damage” (ibid). “They diffuse throughout the tissues and sap of treated plants, and are found in pollen, nectar and guttation droplets” (Miller).

Research has found evidence that environmental contamination, as well as the decline in pollinators, is attributable to the use of neonicotinoid pesticides. The Catholic Women’s League of Canada urges the federal government to ban the use of neonicotinoid pesticides.

## Works Cited

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## **Action Plan**

1. Write letters to your local members of parliament requesting a ban on the widespread use of neonicotinoid pesticides.
2. Avoid buying neonicotinoid treated seeds, seedlings, or products that contain neonicotinoids. Purchase organic plant seedlings or grow plants from untreated seeds in organic potting soil for home gardens.
3. Advise local nursery managers/greenhouses you will only purchase plants free of neonicotinoids and ask managers to communicate your request to their suppliers.
4. Avoid the use of systemic bee-toxic pesticides in your garden. These products may contain acetamiprid, clothianidin, imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, thiacloprid and dinotefuran as active ingredients.
5. If you have these products at home, dispose of them as municipal hazardous waste or take them back to the store where you bought them.
6. Provide habitat for pollinators by planting untreated pollinator-friendly trees and flowers.