

A Message from Purdue's Greg Hunt on Bee Kills Caused by Corn Planting

May 6, 2014

Hi All,

I would like to request that an email be sent to the memberships of the state associations to alert them to imminent threats of bee kills:

I had a bee kill this weekend at my house and we are seeing minor kills at the bee lab. We will be submitting samples to the state chemist. About a thousand dead bees were in front of the hive (and who knows how many did not make it back). Seems to be mostly nurse bees that ate contaminated pollen. A farmer down the hill from me planted corn a third of a mile from my hive. It had dandelions all around it. I found an empty bag of corn kernels with Poncho 1250 seed treatment, the highest rate of clothianidin. The oral LD50 is 4 ng per bee and this neonic is stable in the environment. There is nothing more toxic to bees.

Conditions now as they plant corn are dry and windy, perfect for drift of dust onto dandelions. Someone I know had 8 hives survive the winter but 7 of them died when neighbors sprayed and planted. Large piles in front of the hives.

I suggest that if this happens when neighbors plant corn that you freeze some bees and contact the state chemist:

765-494-1585

You can freeze some bees that just died or are still dying. The bees rot fast. I guess about 100-200 bees is enough.

Dick Rogers of Bayer Crop Science emailed me yesterday and said that they haven't heard any reports throughout the Midwest this year. They have "boots on the ground" and sentinel hives in Indiana. Bayer is trying to downplay any risk of corn seed treatments and even had their Bayer Bee Care event at Purdue.

Regards,
Greg Hunt