

NYS AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY SPEAKS OUT ABOUT IMPORTANCE, SAFETY OF PESTICIDE TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE FUTURE OF FARMING

Advocates outline safe use of neonicotinoid products—critical tools for modern farming during Assembly Committee hearing

ALBANY, NY, USA, September 20, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, advocates from New York's agricultural industries testified in front of the Assembly's Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation about the importance and safety of neonicotinoid products that are used to protect a wide variety of crops grown in New York State.

Speakers representing New York's nearly 6-billion-dollar agricultural sectors sought to educate members of the committee about the science behind these critical technologies, the facts on the products' safety profiles and the environmental benefits of using these newer, precision technologies. The advocates also debunked many of the false and misleading statements that have been raised by those who oppose the use of these products, including the impact on pollinators.

"The New York State Assembly must let science be their guide when setting farm policy. Seed coatings are a valuable part of New York State's highly regarded Integrated Pest Management programs that work to protect pollinators. Banning this precision technology that minimizes spraying would just increase exposure to less safe pesticides while also depleting soil health. A ban would be a step backwards for the health of our people and environment," said David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau President.

In recent years, activists in New York have worked to ban the use of some farming technologies, a move that would be devastating to large and small farms across the state.

Scientific advances, like neonicotinoid-treated seeds, have greatly improved farmers' ability to directly target pests and have reduced the need to spray these products over the top of emerged crops. Because farmers plant seed already coated with these products, rather than spray them onto plants, any exposure to non-target plants, animals and humans is minimized.

"This class of insecticides also provides excellent control of many common, plant-damaging

insects, with very low mammalian toxicity--a very important consideration for the safety of children, pets, and adults," said Patrick Parker, Plant Health Care Program Director for SavATree based in Bedford Hills, N.Y.

Seed treatments play a critical role in the production of healthy crops. Coating seeds with a small amount of pesticide before they are planted protects them during their earliest stages in the ground, when they're most vulnerable from diseases and insects. The use of treated seed can also reduce the need to treat crops later.

"As a vegetable grower, I rely on coated seeds to provide a safe, precise method to deliver crop protectants to assure that my crop gets out of the ground," said Brian Reeves, President of the New York State Vegetable Growers Association and a farmer from Baldwinsville, N.Y. "I cannot afford not to invest in coated seeds if this investment makes the difference between a crop and no crop in a year when the insect pressure could wipe me out. Seed coatings are a good investment over the long term, and they can be part of an integrated pest management program."

Seed treatments are regulated, and the pesticide products applied to seeds undergo rigorous testing and EPA review for those applications prior to being approved for use commercially. The EPA carefully considers effects on non-target pest organisms, including honeybees, when they approve new insecticides for use. EPA data has shown low risk to pollinators from treated seed in recent assessments.

Additionally, New York has a rigorous review and regulatory process. A complete elimination of a class of agricultural products will cause undue complications for New York farmers, who already operate on razor thin margins and many of whom are still recovering from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"What I hear from farmers in the field is tremendous concern they will continue to lose access to crop protection tools such as neonicotinoids," said David DeGolyer, Executive Managing Consultant, Western NY Crop Management Association Cooperative. "This is a barrier to farmers' continued and further adoption of soil health practices. Such restrictions or bans not based upon a science- and risk-based regulatory review would have numerous negative consequences,"

Additionally, speakers pointed to recent good news for pollinators from a newly released report from the USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) that shows that as of 2021, [honeybee colonies](#) in New York are up 3.4 percent year over year. The report goes on to state that varroa mites are the 'top colony stressor' for operations with five or more hives.

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