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Submission on modified reassessment of certain OPC substances - APP202142

The reason I am making a submission is because I live in the Waikato where the farms are predominantly associated with the dairy industry.

Within a 5 km radius are several farms which grow maize for winter crops and also commercial maize growers.

At certain times of the year an agonising amount of dying and disorientated bumble and honey bees can be found falling out of the sky into my back yard. There are so many that the incidence is obvious. It must be devastating for the apiarists to see their factory workers decimated by the careless use of these toxins. And no one ever owns up or takes responsibility for the others' loss.

It took me some time to work out the association between the spraying regimes and these deaths.

Had the farmers been following correct procedures these deaths would not be occurring in these numbers, similarly were the farmers following correct procedures, instructions etc. then one needs to question the product and the wisdom of its use. We all know the importance of bees and food production so why are these people so careless with the product and why is the product available for use if it is known to be so devastating to pollinators.

I support this OPC substances reassessment but I do not think the control measures are stringent enough to achieve the desired outcome which is to protect our pollinators. A carrot and stick method needs to be implemented. Guidelines are not enough.

It must be of huge concern that our bee populations are already weakened and threatened by the varroa mite and one would expect a serious well planned programme rolled out to educate all horticulturalists and farmers around the consequences of continued bad practises.

There is also much ignorance around bee / pollinator mortality associated with household / garden sprays and this needs to be addressed too.

I think it is time that education programmes were run, perhaps starting with all the TV gardening programmes, because without a healthy bee population our food production will collapse with the bee colonies.

I also see a lack of food for our bees in these green farming deserts where the only interest is in grass growth. More support could be given to bee keepers to ensure the bees do not starve in these areas by ensuring life supporting plants were grown for the bees. The whole planet would benefit from some extra trees.

As the Environmental Protection Agency you need to protect the environment we humans depend on.

Most OPC substances are incredibly environmentally unfriendly. The use of them needs to be discouraged. It is not enough to ask users to restrict use for a short time frame when it is known that the time frame suggested is inadequate to protect the bees.

The bees are dying of systemic poisoning. You are the authorising agent for applications so maybe the buck needs to stop at your door.

The previous regime which requested that some sprays be used only at night to offer protection for the bees was an insult to intelligence.

Wake up, our world is dying.

Please put some REAL controls in place.