CONNECTICUT FOR ANIMALS
Education Fund 501(c)(3)

NEONICOTINOID PESTICIDES

THE PROBLEM

Our health, food supply, and environment are at risk with the use of neonics.

Neonics are poisons

Neonicotinoids (neonics for short) are the most widely used insecticide in the world. Neonics affect the neurological system and have been shown to harm brain and heart development in prenatally exposed children. A recent study of 171 pregnant women in the US found that over 95% had neonics in their bodies. The CDC found neonics in 50% of the population, the highest concentrations found in children.

Neonics destroy food chains and poison waterways

We are facing drastic declines in bee and other insect populations, as well as the loss of 3 billion birds in the last 50 years, with the sharpest drop seen in birds who eat insects.

Neonics are systemic pesticides; plants treated with them are force multipliers creating 24-hour pesticide dispersal from seedling through final disintegration. The pollen, fruit, and even the dew on the leaves of these plants are toxic to bees and other insects.

Neonics are water soluble so easily wash into rivers and streams. Data shows that surface water contamination levels caused by neonics are high enough to cause significant impacts in aquatic food chains.

Neonic-coated seeds are exempt from regulation

The Department of Agriculture does not track how much corn sold in CT is grown from neonic-coated seeds because, thanks to a loophole, this pesticide seed coating has been exempted from government regulation on the grounds that it is not labeled a pesticide when on a seed.

FAST FACTS

- One neonic-coated seed is enough to kill a songbird.
- One square foot of grass can have enough neonics to kill 1 million bees.
- The 3 most used neonics likely jeopardize the continued existence of over 200 threatened and endangered species, representing 11% of the list.
- USGS studies show neonics in 50% of US streams, including the Norwalk and Connecticut Rivers.
- A study on Long Island found neonics in 30% of drinking water.

- Over 800 million corn seeds are planted each year in Connecticut and virtually all (except organic) are coated with neonics.
- Only 5% of that pesticide coating is taken up into the plant, according to industry research. The remaining 95% moves through soil and air into waterways.
- Several studies report that using neonic-coated seeds provide little to no economic benefit to farmers who use them.

WHERE IT'S HAPPENING

While most neonic uses are banned in Europe and parts of Canada, in the US, only about ten states have some restrictions in place.

- In 2016, CT passed the Pollinator Protection Act which classifies neonics as "restricted use," barring them from retail sale and only allowing use by certified applicators.
- In 2022, CT banned the use of the neurotoxin pesticide chlorpyrifos on golf courses (where 80% of use occurred) but dropped the part of the bill that would have banned neonics from non-agricultural uses.
- In 2022 and 2023, CT failed to pass bills to ban neonic use on lawns and ornamental landscapes despite wide support from state legislators and residents.

THE SOLUTION

Call for the federal regulation and tracking of neonic-coated seeds. In Connecticut, monitor and restrict the use of neonics on lawns and ornamental landscapes, and use viable, more sustainable alternatives to neonics for grub control.

Neonic alternatives include:

1) A bio-insecticide, Grub-Gone, employs Btg (Bacillis thuringiesnsis gallerias), available since 2018.

2) Milky spore is a Japanese beetle grub killing bacterium best applied in late summer. (Less effective in cold climates.)

3) A parasitic wasp called Spring Tiphia is reported to be very effective at control of Japanese beetles.

RESOURCES

Neonics: The New DDT - *Protect Birds, Bees, Food & Water from Neonicotinoid Pesticide Contamination* 507894_afa397fbc37547eda383e30817dd64ab.pdf (pollinator-pathway.org)

When Voluntary Action Isn't Enough: The Case for Regulating Pesticide-Coated Seed | Xerces Society https://xerces.org/blog/when-voluntary-action-isnt-enough-case-for-regulating-pesticide-coated-seed

Do Not Buy Guide: 110149_0f1825ab84d6464985a9fc7048ce8228.pdf (pollinator-pathway.org)

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