

Pollinator Protection Committee Meeting Minutes: DRAFT & UNAPPROVED

November 9, 2016-Ethan Allen Room Capitol Plaza, Montpelier, VT

Committee members present

- Katie Ballard (KB)
- Eric Boire (EB)
- Terry Bradshaw (TB)-Chair
- Chris Conant (CC)
- Ross Conrad (RC)
- Cary Giguere (CG)
- John Hayden (JH)
- Mike Palmer (MP)
- Leif Richardson (LR)
- Jane Sorensen (JS)

Linda Boccuzzo-administrative (LB)

1. Meeting convened at 9:37 AM.
2. Past meeting minutes were edited to clarify the importation of “bee boxes” refers to bumblebees, not honey bees. Eric Boire made motion to approve; Ross Conrad seconded. Minutes, with edits, were approved unanimously.
3. Discussion around how to collate and present recommendations. Categories/guidelines similar to Oregon Pollinator Task Force Report was suggested: general consensus, general agreement, split opinion. If there is enough time to review prior to next meeting, post, and begin discussion and voting next meeting.

4. *Presenters:*

Leif Richardson discussed the peer-reviewed scientific studies done related to neonicotinoid pesticides and native pollinators. Leif will write up his summary and send to the Committee members.

Dr. Sid Bosworth (via phone) UVM Extension agronomist discussed field crops, pest pressures, insect damage and the use of neonicotinoid treated seed in Vermont. Discussion followed after about old versus new seed treatment insecticide applications and risks (acute, or otherwise) to humans and pollinators from each method.

Dr. David Biddinger (via phone) Penn State University discussed: the value of native pollinators in small orchards, pests & IPM practices for insect pests in apple orchards, impacts of new/old pesticide chemistries for orchards, and the concept of Integrated Pest & Pollinator Management. Would like Committee members to be aware of this paper:

<http://ento.psu.edu/pollinators/publications/integrated-pest-and-pollinator-management-2014-adding-a-new-dimension-to-an-accepted-paradigm>

Discussion followed after about the high application rates of homeowner tree fruit neonicotinoid products.

Katie Ballard discussed the use of neonicotinoid treated seeds on her family’s farm in Georgia, Vermont and some of the potential impacts that may be associated with the loss of them. She also discussed the balance of multiple regulatory initiatives and economics. Yield losses may result in the planting of more acreage in corn on the farm.

Discussion on finances/yield losses for dairy farms followed. Crop insurance only covers a county-wide situation and usually requires a 20% loss. Ways to find provide financial incentives, not harm for dairy farmers was noted. Lack of specific yield research data on corn grown as silage (not grain) with treated seed was stated. Benefits and limitations of cover crops in dairy farms were mentioned.

Chris Conant discussed the use of neonicotinoid pesticides in the nursery/greenhouse industry. He had spoken with many of his Vermont constituents and provided the thoughts from those conversations. He also provided background information on the industry in Vermont. He noted that the alternatives to neonicotinoid or other products (e.g., biocontrol) may not be cost-realistic for a commercial enterprise. A loss of neonicotinoid pesticides would likely result in a return to older more human-toxic products. The goal is to limit his worker and consumer exposures, as well any environmental effects—and neonicotinoids are a part of that toolbox. *Jane Sorensen* mentioned that in her landscape/bedding plant business, she has little insect pressure—part of that she attributes to landscape in which her business is located-an organic vegetable farm. A lack of data about neonicotinoids in annuals and other landscape plants was noted.

Kevin Komer, representing the Vermont Golf Course Superintendent's Association, discussed the use of neonicotinoids on golf courses in Vermont. There are approximately 65 golf courses in Vermont. Neonicotinoids are used primarily for control of white grubs. Treatments occur only on greens, tees and fairways, usually in the 1st week of July. Grubs eat the roots of the turf and are hard to detect until the damage shows. The presence of grubs also brings a secondary pest: skunks. Skunks then eat the grubs and can do significant damage to the turf. An alternative to neonicotinoids are about 3x the cost or are much older chemistries.

5. General discussion:

The attractiveness of corn to bees was questioned. It was indicated that honey bees are not really attracted to corn; sweet corn is slightly more attractive than field corn. However, in an area where there is no other forage and/or limited water, both pollen and guttation fluid they will become more likely as a nutrient source.

Neonicotinoid recommendations need to be developed from the information received. Cary Giguere will compile. All Committee members should send recommendations to him by **Monday, November 14th**. Cary will compile recommendations and text by the 17th (hopefully) and get back out to the Committee. Cary would like input from all the Committee members.

The concept of UVM developing research to address some of the data gaps, and develop best management practices that could be used by all growers (nurseries, farmers etc) to allow for more understanding of the impacts to finances, the environment and human health.

Discussion about the draft environmental data collected by the Agency. Mike Palmer offered up more pollen for testing, if it was helpful to the Agency of Agriculture. Previous pollen data was presented in the Agency's report on neonicotinoids.

A motion to extend the meeting was made by Jane Sorensen, seconded by Chris Conant. Members unanimously approved.

Discussion on possible route forward for Vermont Pesticide Advisory Council, the Legislative requirements etc. Cary will notify the legislature that the Committee and/or timeline for report may need to be extended.

Mike Kiernan introduced himself and his business of planting habitat in solar farms.

Linda will send out suggestions for scheduling of a January meeting.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Eric Boire, and seconded by Leif Richardson. Motion approved unanimously. **Meeting adjourned at 13:27 PM**

Submitted LAB 11/10/2016

Others attending

- Chuck Ross, Secretary of the Agency of Agriculture
- Jim Leland, Agency of Agriculture
- Margaret Laggis, CropLife America
- David Tremblay, Agency of Agriculture
- Craig Di Giammarino, VTrans
- Jarod Wilcox, Green Mountain Power
- Nat Shambaugh, public
- Kevin Komer, VT Golf Course Superintendent's Ass'n
- Judy Bellairs, Sierra Club
- Mike Kiernan, Bee the Change
- Andrew Bahrenburg, Rural Vermont