

MEDIA RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

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Nonprofits, Industry, Universities Join Together in Third Year of Research to Keep Bees Safe during Corn Planting

The **Corn Dust Research Consortium (CRDC)** announced today funding for three new research projects that will generate critical information on pollinator safety and pesticide management.

Honey bee exposure to neonicotinoid pesticides has been a growing concern with the ubiquity of treated corn seed planted in North America and Europe. In 2011 a significant honey bee die off following corn planting led to speculation that these seed coatings could be impacting honey bee health. Seed treatments prevent the use of aerial sprays and therefore would reduce the non-target impacts of drift that are associated with pesticide applications; However, work by **Dr. Christian Krupke of Purdue University** showed that these seed coatings and the pesticides used in these treatments can be abraded by standard lubricants used during the physical act of planting and exhausted into the surrounding landscape. This year's CDRC grants continue to support research into managing and mitigating the impacts of pesticides to bees and improving bee health. The recipients are:



Dr. Jerry Bromenshenk will lead a team at the **University of Montana, Missoula** examining the long-term health consequences of exposure of honey bee colonies to dust emitted during planting of neonicotinoid treated corn seeds. This is the first study that plans to follow the health and survival of honey bees long after interaction with corn dust to better understand how honey bee health throughout the year relates to early season corn planting. Risk reduction is a primary concern for beekeepers that have colonies in agricultural areas. **Ohio State University** and the **University of Guelph** will continue to examine strategies for reducing the chances of exposure that honey bees face during corn planting, headed by **Dr. Reed Johnson** and **Dr. Art Schaafsma** respectively. For Drs. Johnson and Schaafsma, this is the third year of study into risk reduction strategies that have already generated best management practice suggestions for US and Canadian regulators and which have been adopted by growers and beekeepers.



The CDRC was created by the Pollinator Partnership as a vehicle to fund, oversee and advise on research projects to further our understanding of best management practices for mitigating seed treatment exposure of honey bees during corn planting. This

collaboration brings together industry, academia, government, and most importantly farmers and beekeepers to address key issues through a collaborative approach that is unique in today's climate of distrust and cynicism in bee health issues. **Funding and participation through the life of this project has come from:**

- American Beekeeping Federation
- American Honey Producers Association
- American Seed Trade Association
- Association of Equipment Manufacturers
- BASF
- Bayer CropScience
- Canadian Honey Council
- Farm Equipment Manufacturers Association
- Industrial Minerals Association – North America
- National Corn Growers Association
- Pollinator Partnership
- Syngenta Crop Protection, LLC
- University of Maryland

"We feel that the consequences of potential harm to honey bees have been taken very seriously by every institution involved in this collaboration," says **Pollinator Partnership Executive Director Laurie Davies Adams**. She adds, "We have achieved something remarkable and rare - a consortium working together to improve the situation for honey bees through balanced, unbiased, and cooperative engagement in objective science."

The United States Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Health Canada's Pesticide Management and Regulator Agency are key members of the CRDC and have received support for policy actions and best management protocols from the research findings.

"The impacts of pesticides on bees can be both chronic and acute, but the lasting effects of exposure to the functioning of the colony and especially winter survival rates have not been studied sufficiently. Now we have an opportunity to follow the health of bees through their colony life cycle and gain an understanding of some of the downstream impacts seed treatments might have," says **Pollinator Partnership Research Director Dr. Vicki Wojcik**.

To date over \$600,000 has been distributed to independent researchers at Universities across the United States and Canada through the CDRC. For more information on CDRC participants, 2013 and 2014 research findings and best management guidelines developed by the working group please visit <http://www.pollinator.org/CDRC>.

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ABOUT THE POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP (P2)

Established in 1997, the Pollinator Partnership is the largest 501(c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to the health, protection, and conservation of all pollinating animals. Pollinator Partnership's actions for pollinators include education, conservation, restoration, policy, and research. P2's financial support comes through grants, gifts, memberships and donations from any interested party. Its policies are science-based, set by its board of directors, and never influenced by any donor. To make a donation in support of our mission, or for information, visit www.pollinator.org.

To learn about National Pollinator Week, see: http://www.pollinator.org/pollinator_week_2015.htm