



For Immediate Release

GRAIN FARMING UNDER ATTACK BY GOVERNMENT

New Pesticide Regulations Impractical and Unrealistic

GUELPH, ON (November 25, 2014) - Grain Farmers of Ontario is confounded by today's announcement by the government to reduce neonicotinoid use by 80% by 2017. The announcement flies in the face of numerous efforts and investments made by grain farmers across the province over the past two years to mitigate risks to bee health.

"This new regulation is unfounded, impractical, and unrealistic and the government does not know how to implement it," says Henry Van Ankum, Chair of Grain Farmers of Ontario. "With this announcement, agriculture and rural Ontario has been put on notice - the popular vote trumps science and practicality."

Grain Farmers of Ontario has invested in ongoing multi-year research projects to mitigate risks to bee health associated with neonicotinoids. In 2014, all 28,000 grain farmers across the province followed new best management practices and utilized a new fluency agent to minimize possible seed treatment exposure to bees. This year, 70% less bee deaths were reported.

"A reduction at this level puts our farmers at a competitive disadvantage with the rest of the country and the rest of the North America," says Barry Senft, CEO of Grain Farmers of Ontario. "It will mean smaller margins for grain farmers and could signal the transition away from family farms to large multinational farming operations that can sustain lower margins."

Grain Farmers of Ontario has expressed its concerns over these regulations at all levels of government in recent meetings. A restriction at the 80% level is comparable to a total ban on the product, which the Conference Board of Canada estimates will cost Ontario farmers more than \$630 million annually in lost revenue.

"At a time when the government is calling for more jobs, this is a step in the wrong direction," says Van Ankum. "Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency continues to license this product for the country and Ontario is now being forced to operate in isolation at an enormous competitive disadvantage - the livelihoods of countless farmers are in jeopardy."

Grain Farmers of Ontario

Grain Farmers of Ontario is the province's largest commodity organization, representing Ontario's 28,000 corn, soybean and wheat farmers. The crops they grow cover 5 million acres of farm land across the province, generate over \$2.5 billion in farm gate receipts, result in over \$9 billion in economic output and are responsible for over 40,000 jobs in the province.

- 30 -

Contact:

Henry Van Ankum, Chair - 519 835-4200; henryvanankum@sympatico.ca

Barry Senft, CEO - 519 831-0194; bsenft@gfo.ca

Meghan Burke, Communications - 519 767-2773; mburke@gfo.ca

Grain Farmers of Ontario
679 Southgate Drive, Guelph, Ontario N1G 4S2
Tel: 1-800-265-0550 Fax: 519-767-9713 www.gfo.ca