

GMO Corn Increased Pesticide Use by 300%; US Government Agency Claims Exact Opposite to Protect Biotech Industry

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The overall percentage of U.S. crop acreage exposed to chemical insecticides is significantly higher than regulatory authorities are claiming, warns a shocking new report released by the Center for Food Safety (CFS). Data compiled by scientists from Pennsylvania State University (PSU) reveals that nearly half of all planted soybean seed and up to 100 percent of all corn seed is now treated with or exposed to insecticides.

These figures are astronomically higher than the ones that were publicly released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which together with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been lying to the public about this pertinent issue for years. The two agencies contend that since the introduction of neonicotinoid pesticides, which are commonly used as a coating on many crop seeds, insecticide use is down. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

Also referred to as “neonics,” neonicotinoids are a class of insecticides that recent science has exposed as a major culprit in colony collapse disorder (CCD) among bees. In the mid-2000s, chemical manufacturers came up with a way to coat seeds with neonics rather than spray crops with them, a process that took off in the following decade. However, it turns out that neither the USDA nor the EPA have been calculating neonic use data with these new seed coating technologies in mind.

As a result, official government data greatly underestimates insecticide use across the board, conveying the false notion that chemical use has decreased when it has actually increased at least threefold. The CFS report puts it this way:

“Claims by the [pesticide](#) industry that insecticide use has dropped in the United States exclude the most widespread use of neonics,” the report explains, referring to neonic-coated crop seeds. “This leaves a gaping hole in our pesticide data, and greatly underestimates harm to the environment. This is because the planting of seeds coated with a neonic, or other pesticides (such as fungicides), are not considered to be a pesticide application by the EPA, unlike pesticides sprayed on a crop.”

Neonics scientifically shown to harm bees, humans and the environment; time for an absolute ban!

To what extent is the government underestimating crop exposure to insecticides? In 2010, the USDA reported that only 12 percent of corn acres were treated with applied pesticides, when the truth is that between 79 and 100 percent of corn acres were either sprayed with

insecticides or planted with insecticide-coated seeds. Similar data anomalies exist for soybean, cotton and wheat seeds.

Part of the problem is that insecticides, and neonics in particular, are environmentally persistent. These chemicals are ever-present in soils, and they are highly mobile in water. Most streams in the U.S. Midwest, in fact, are now contaminated with neonics, according to published data that remains ignored by the USDA and the EPA.

Conservatively speaking, more than 100 million acres of U.S. cropland are now directly exposed to neonic insecticides, but you'd never know this from the official government data. Collectively, more than half of all corn, wheat, cotton and soybean crops are exposed in some way to insecticides like neonics, whether directly or indirectly.

Neonics are known to kill bees, and the data shows that they aren't even effective at deterring pests. The European Union banned them entirely in 2013, identifying "high acute risks" for bees, which our readers well know are important pollinators. All sorts of beneficial species are harmed by neonics, as are humans and the environment, and yet the U.S. continues to lead the way in allowing chemical companies to poison the food supply and the planet with their indiscriminate use.

Even in very small amounts, neonics are highly toxic to insects as a whole. They're also residually persistent and extremely water soluble. In other words, they travel far and wide and take an extremely long time to break down, which means they are accumulating rapidly throughout the environment with no end in sight.

Neonics are also systemic, which means they are directly absorbed by the plants on which they are spread or through the seeds they coat. Besides the obvious negative effects of this on bees and other pollinators who feed on the resultant tainted pollen and nectar, humans who consume neonic-contaminated food crops are also harmed.

"Neonics ... indirectly harm the crops they are supposed to protect by killing insects that boost crop productivity through consumption of crop pests," explains the [CFS report](#). "Seed coatings have already been shown to result in lower crop productivity in experiments with soybeans because of harm to protective insects. It is also likely to be causing other indirect harm, such as to farmland birds through loss of insect food sources."

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