
From: Karen Snyder

Sent: Monday, July 23, 2018 11:06 AM

To: Pesticides <Pesticides@maine.gov>

Subject: Please Protect Local Pesticide Ordinances - Don't be Persuaded by Agribusiness and RISE Lobbyist

Dear Maine Pesticide Control Board Members,

I live in Portland and I am a small time beekeeper on Munjoy Hill.

I am also an organic perennial and vegetable farmer.

I find it very easy to NOT use pesticides or chemicals of any kind to maintain my properties. Property owners that use chemicals still to maintain their lawns or gardens obviously haven't done their research to understand how damaging chemically treating their properties are to the environment and their future health... especially since Monsanto now has a huge amount of lawsuits against them. The property owners that are complaining about getting a waiver for treating their property chemically, shame on them for not taking the initiative to find organic ways to treat their property.

I continue to be concerned about how corporations in the agribusiness/landscapers and lobbyist from Washington DC such as RISE who continually try to undermine any protections that Americans want against pesticide or neonicotinoids spraying of all sorts that have now basically infiltrated American food and water sources through the entire country besides the damaging effects of this planet's eco systems.

This latest attack is about re-introducing chemical spraying for BTM is just another example of RISE lobbyist efforts to try to re-instate BTM chemical spraying for profiteering motivation rather than considering long term environmental damage effects chemical spraying can cause to the health of people and biodiversity.

Isn't it worth a little more effort to remove BTM mechanically rather than chemical spraying if it saves the environment and biodiversity? When will US federal, state, local governments stop being persuaded by businesses who only want to poison the environment for their short term profit greed and think of protecting the environment as their first priority instead? The rest of the other 1st worlds think this latter way....

As such, please consider the health of this planet and future generations to NOT be persuaded by agribusiness/landscapers and lobbyist groups like RISE.

If Europe can ban all pesticides, let Maine Pesticide Control Board NOT be persuaded by agribusiness/landscapers and RISE lobbyist and think of the environmental impacts instead. Below are some articles that should scare the Maine Pesticide Control Board what pesticides have done to the environment and to do the right thing...

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/speaking-of-science/wp/2017/04/05/iowa-scientists-find-first-evidence-of-popular-farm-pesticides-in-drinking-water/?utm_term=.2234408bf2f2

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/aug/23/hawaii-birth-defects-pesticides-gmo>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/apr/27/eu-agrees-total-ban-on-bee-harming-pesticides>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/21/catastrophe-as-frances-bird-population-collapses-due-to-pesticides>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/mar/21/europe-faces-biodiversity-oblivion-after-collapse-in-french-bird-populations>

<https://ento.psu.edu/publications/are-neonicotinoids-killing-bees>

https://www.momsacrossamerica.com/glyphosate_contamination_in_wine

Regards,
Karen Snyder
Portland, ME



Speaking of Science

First evidence found of popular farm pesticides in drinking water

By [Ben Guarino](#) April 5, 2017 [✉Email the author](#)

Of the many pesticides that American farmers have embraced in their war on bugs, neonicotinoids are among the most popular. One of them, called imidacloprid, is among the world's best-selling insecticides, boasting sales of over [\\$1 billion a year](#). But with their widespread use comes a notorious reputation — that neonics, as they are nicknamed, are a bee killer. A 2016 study suggested a link between neonicotinoid use and [local pollinator extinctions](#), though other agricultural researchers contested the pesticides' bad rap.

As the bee debate raged, scientists studying the country's waterways started to detect neonicotinoid pollutants. In 2015, the U.S. Geological Survey collected water samples from streams [throughout the United States](#) and discovered neonicotinoids in more than half of the samples.

And on Wednesday, a team of chemists and engineers at the USGS and University of Iowa reported that they found neonicotinoids in treated drinking water. It marks the first time that anyone has identified this class of pesticide in tap water, the researchers write in [Environmental Science & Technology Letters](#).

[Gregory LeFevre](#), a study author and U of Iowa environmental engineer, told The Washington Post that the find was important but not immediate cause for alarm.

"Having these types of compounds present in water does have the potential to be concerning," he said, "but we don't really know, at this point, what these levels might be."

If the dose makes the poison, the doses of insect neurotoxin reported in the new study were quite small. The scientists collected samples last year from taps in Iowa City as well as on the university campus and found neonicotinoid concentrations ranging from 0.24 to 57.3 nanograms per liter — that is, on a scale of parts per trillion. "Parts per trillion is a really, really small concentration," LeFevre said, roughly equal to a single drop of water plopped into 20 Olympic-size swimming pools.

The Environmental Protection Agency has not defined safe levels of neonicotinoids in drinking water, in part because the chemicals are relative newcomers to the pesticide pantheon. "There is no EPA standard for drinking water," LeFevre said. The pesticides, most of which were released in the 1990s, were designed to be more environmentally friendly than other chemicals on the market. The compounds work their way into plant tissue rather than just coating the leaves and stems, requiring fewer sprays. And though the pesticides wreak havoc on insect nervous systems, neonicotinoids do not easily cross from a mammal's bloodstream into a mammalian brain.

In 2015, environmental health scientists at George Washington University and the National Institutes of Health published a review of human health risks from neonic [pesticide exposure](#). Acute exposure — to high concentrations over a brief period — resulted in "low rates of adverse health effects." Reports of chronic, low-level exposure had "suggestive but methodologically weak findings," with a Japanese study associating neonicotinoids with memory loss.

[Melissa Perry](#), a public health researcher at George Washington University who was involved in that review, said via email that the new study "provides further evidence that neonicotinoid pesticides are present in our daily environments. From a public health standpoint, this issue clearly needs better attention."

The Iowa scientists tracked neonicotinoid concentrations in the local drinking supply from May to July, the seven-week span after the region's farmers planted maize and soy crops. Every sample contained three types of neonicotinoids: clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam.

"Everything in the watershed is connected," LeFevre said. "This is one of many types of trace pollutants that might be present in rivers." (The USGS released an interactive map of the nation's water quality on Tuesday, where those inclined can track trends in [common pollutants](#).)

Most water filtration systems target clay, dirt or other particles, as well as pathogenic contaminants like bacteria. They're not designed to eliminate chemical pesticides — and the properties of neonicotinoids make these compounds unusually challenging to remove. Other types of pesticides stick to soil particles, which are then filtered out. But neonicotinoids can slip past sand filters because they are polar chemicals. “They dissolve very readily in water,” LeFevre said. He invoked a chemistry aphorism: “Like dissolves like.”

This proved out as the research team looked at how effectively the university's sand filtration system and Iowa City's different water treatment technique blocked the three neonicotinoids studied. The university's sand filter removed 1 percent of the clothianidin, 8 percent of imidacloprid and 44 percent of thiamethoxam. By contrast, the city's activated carbon filter blocked 100 percent of clothianidin, 94 percent of imidacloprid and 85 percent of thiamethoxam. That finding was “quite a pleasant surprise,” LeFevre said. “It's definitely not all bad news.”

The activated carbon filters are relatively economical, he said. In fact, after the research was completed, the university installed a similar system on its campus.

Given the study's small sample size and geographical span, Perry said more comprehensive assessments of water supplies are needed “to determine how ubiquitous neonics are in water supplies in other parts of the country.” The chance of that happening is unclear. “There is currently no national effort to measure to what extent neonicotinoids are making it into our bodies, be it through water or food,” she noted.

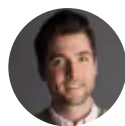
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[New studies find that bees actually want to eat the pesticides that hurt them](#)

[Norway is creating a 'bee highway' to protect pollinators](#)

[Plastic microbeads from face wash are polluting river sediment](#)

 **77 Comments**

**Ben Guarino**

Ben Guarino is a reporter for The Washington Post's Speaking of Science section. Before joining The Post in 2016, he worked as a freelance science journalist, an associate editor at the Dodo and a medical reporter at the McMahon Group. He also has a background in bioengineering. [Follow](#) 

The Guardian



Pesticides in paradise: Hawaii's spike in birth defects puts focus on GM crops

Local doctors are in the eye of a storm swirling for the past three years over whether corn that's been genetically modified to resist pesticides is a source of prosperity, as companies claim, or of birth defects and illnesses

Christopher Pala in Waimea

Sun 23 Aug 2015 07:00 EDT

Pediatrician Carla Nelson remembers catching sight of the unusually pale newborn, then hearing an abnormal heartbeat through the stethoscope and thinking that something was terribly wrong.

The baby was born minutes before with a severe heart malformation that would require complex surgery. What worried her as she waited for the ambulance plane to take the infant from Waimea, on the island of Kauai, to the main children's hospital in Honolulu, on another Hawaiian island, was that it was the fourth one she had seen in three years.

In all of Waimea, there have been at least nine in five years, she says, shaking her head. That's more than 10 times the national rate, according to analysis by local doctors.

Nelson, a Californian, and other local doctors find themselves in the eye of a storm swirling for the past three years around the Hawaiian archipelago over whether a major cash crop on four of the six main islands, corn that's been genetically modified to resist pesticides, is a source of prosperity, as the companies claim - or of birth defects and illnesses, as the doctors and many others suspect.

After four separate attempts to rein in the companies over the past two years all failed, an estimated 10,000 people marched on 9 August through Honolulu's Waikiki tourist district. Some held signs like, "We Deserve the Right to Know: Stop Poisoning Paradise" and "Save Hawaii - Stop GMOs" (Genetically Modified Organisms), while others protested different issues.

"The turnout and the number of groups marching showed how many people are very frustrated with the situation," says native Hawaiian activist Walter Ritte of the island of Molokai.

Seventeen times more restricted-use insecticides



Waimea and the GMO fields. The two orange-roof buildings at bottom left are the Middle School. The one to its right is the hospital. Photograph: Christopher Pala for the Guardian

Waimea, a small town of low, pastel wood houses built in south-west Kauai for plantation workers in the 19th century, now sustains its economy mostly from a trickle of tourists on their way to a spectacular canyon. Perhaps 200 people work full-time for the four giant chemical companies that grow the corn - all of it exported - on some 12,000 acres leased mostly from the state.

In Kauai, chemical companies Dow, BASF, Syngenta and DuPont spray 17 times more restricted-use insecticides per acre than on ordinary cornfields in the US mainland, according to the most detailed study of the sector, by the Center for Food Safety.

Just in Kauai, 18 tons - including atrazine, paraquat (both banned in Europe) and chlorpyrifos - were applied in 2012. The World Health Organization this year announced that glyphosate, sold as Roundup, the most common of the non-restricted herbicides, is "probably carcinogenic in humans".

The cornfields lie above Waimea as the land, developed in the 1870s for the Kekaha Sugar Company plantation, slopes gently up toward arid, craggy hilltops. Most fields are reddish-brown and perfectly furrowed. Some parts are bright green: that's when the corn is actually grown.

Both parts are sprayed frequently, sometimes every couple of days. Most of the fields lie fallow at any given time as they await the next crop, but they are still sprayed with pesticides to keep

anything from growing. “To grow either seed crops or test crops, you need soil that’s essentially sterile,” says professor Hector Valenzuela of the University of Hawaii department of tropical plant and soil science.

When the spraying is underway and the wind blows downhill from the fields to the town - a time no spraying should occur - residents complain of stinging eyes, headaches and vomiting.

“Your eyes and lungs hurt, you feel dizzy and nauseous. It’s awful,” says middle school special education teacher Howard Hurst, who was present at two evacuations. “Here, 10% of the students get special-ed services, but the state average is 6.3%,” he says. “It’s hard to think the pesticides don’t play a role.”

At these times, many crowd the waiting rooms of the town’s main hospital, which was run until recently by Dow AgroSciences’ former chief lobbyist in Honolulu. It lies beside the middle school, both 1,700ft from Syngenta fields. The hospital, built by the old sugar plantation, has never studied the effects of the pesticides on its patients.

The chemical companies that grow the corn in land previously used for sugar refuse to disclose with any precision which chemicals they use, where and in what amounts, but they insist the pesticides are safe, and most state and local politicians concur. “The Hawai’i legislature has never given the slightest indication that it intended to regulate genetically engineered crops,” wrote lawyer Paul Achitoff of Earthjustice in a recent court case.

As for the birth defects spike, “We have not seen any credible source of statistical health information to support the claims,” said Bennette Misalucha, executive director of Hawaii Crop Improvement Association, the chemical companies trade association, in a written statement distributed by a publicist. She declined to be interviewed.

Nelson, the pediatrician, points out that American Academy of Pediatrics’ report, Pesticide Exposure in Children, found “an association between pesticides and adverse birth outcomes, including physical birth defects”. Noting that local schools have been evacuated twice and children sent to hospital because of pesticide drift, Nelson says doctors need prior disclosure of sprayings: “It’s hard to treat a child when you don’t know which chemical he’s been exposed to.”

Her concerns and those of most of her colleagues have grown as the chemical companies doubled to 25,000 acres in a decade the area in Hawaii they devote to growing new varieties of herbicide-resistant corn.

Today, about 90% of industrial GMO corn grown in the US was originally developed in Hawaii, with the island of Kauai hosting the biggest area. The balmy weather yields three crops a year instead of one, allowing the companies to bring a new strain to market in a third of the time.

Once it’s ready, the same fields are used to raise seed corn, which is sent to contract farms on the mainland. It is their output, called by critics a pesticide delivery system, that is sold to the US farmers, along with the pesticides manufactured by the breeder that each strain has been modified to tolerate.

Corn’s uses are as industrial as its cultivation: less than 1% is eaten. About 40% is turned into ethanol for cars, 36% becomes cattle feed, 10% is used by the food industry and the rest is exported.

'We just want to gather information'



A march against pesticides in Hawaii. Photograph: Christopher Pala for the Guardian

At a Starbucks just outside Honolulu, Sidney Johnson, a pediatric surgeon at the Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children who oversees all children born in Hawaii with major birth defects and operates on many, says he's been thinking about pesticides a lot lately. The reason: he's noticed that the number of babies born here with their abdominal organs outside, a rare condition known as gastroschisis, has grown from three a year in the 1980s to about a dozen now.

"We have cleanest water and air in the world," he says. So he's working with a medical student on a study of his hospital's records to determine whether the parents of the gastroschisis infants were living near fields that were being sprayed around the time of conception and early pregnancy. He plans to extend the study to parents of babies suffering from heart defects.

"You kind of wonder why this wasn't done before," he says. "Data from other states show there might be a link, and Hawaii might be the best place to prove it."

Unbeknownst to Johnson, another two physicians have been heading in the same direction, but with some constraints. They're members of a state-county commission appointed this year to "determine if there are human harms coming from these pesticides", as its chairman, a professional facilitator named Peter Adler, tells a meeting of angry local residents in Waimea earlier this month. Several express skepticism that the panel is anything but another exercise in obfuscation.

The panel of nine part-time volunteers also includes two scientists from the chemical companies and several of their critics. "We just want to gather information and make some recommendations," Adler tells the crowd of about 60 people. "We won't be doing any original research."

But one of the two doctors, a retired pediatrician named Lee Evslin, plans to do just that. "I want see if any health trends stand out among people that might have been exposed to pesticides," he says in an interview. "It won't be a full epidemiological study, but it will probably be more complete than anything that's been done before."

The panel itself, called the Joint Fact-Finding Study Group on Genetically Modified Crops and Pesticides on Kaua'i, is the only achievement of three years of failed attempts to force the

companies to disclose in advance what they spray and to create buffer zones - which they do in 11 other states, where food crops receive much less pesticides per acre.

The pushback from the expansion of the GMO acreage first emerged when Gary Hooser of Kauai, a former state senate majority leader who failed in a bid for lieutenant governor in 2010, ran for his old seat on the Kauai County council in 2012.

“Everywhere I went, people were concerned about GMOs and pesticides. They were saying, ‘Gary, we gotta do something’,” he recounts over coffee at the trendy Ha Coffee Bar in Lihue, the island’s capital. “Some were worried about the GMO process itself and others by the threats of the pesticides, and it became one of the dominant political issues.”

Once elected, Hooser, who has a ruddy complexion, piercing blue eyes and arrived in Hawaii as a teenager from California, approached the companies for information about exactly what they were spraying and in what amounts. He was rebuffed.

In the process of what he called “doing my homework”, he discovered that the companies, unlike regular farmers, were operating under a decades-old Environmental Protection Agency permit to discharge toxic chemicals in water that had been grandfathered from the days of the sugar plantation, when the amounts and toxicities of pesticides were much lower. The state has asked for a federal exemption for the companies so they can avoid modern standards of compliance.

He also found that the companies, unlike regular farmers, don’t pay the 4% state excise tax. Some weren’t even asked to pay property taxes, worth \$125,000 a year. After pressure from Hooser and the county tax office, the companies paid two years’ worth of back taxes.

So with the backing of three other members of the seven-member Kauai council, he drafted a law requiring the companies to disclose yearly what they had grown and where, and to announce in advance which pesticides they proposed to spray, where and when. The law initially also imposed a moratorium on the chemical companies expanding their acreage while their environmental impact was assessed.

After a series of hearings packed by company employees and their families wearing blue and opponents wearing red, the bill was watered down by eliminating the moratorium and reducing the scope of the environmental study. The ordinance then passed, but the companies sued in federal court, where a judge ruled that the state’s law on pesticides precluded the counties from regulating them. After the ruling, the state and the county created the joint fact-finding panel officially committed to conducting no new research.

Hooser is confident the ruling will be overturned on appeal: the Hawaii constitution “specifically requires” the state and the counties to protect the communities and their environment.

In his appeal, Achitoff of Earthjustice argued that Hawaii’s general pesticide law does not “demonstrate that the legislature intended to force the county to sit and watch while its schoolchildren are being sent to the hospital so long as state agencies do not remedy the problem.”

In the Big Island, which is called Hawaii and hosts no GMO corn, a similar process unfolded later in 2013: the county council passed a law that effectively banned the chemical companies from moving in, and it was struck down in federal court for the same reasons. A ban on genetically modified taro, a food root deemed sacred in Hawaiian mythology, was allowed to stand.

In Maui County, which includes the islands of Maui and Molokai, both with large GMO corn fields, a group of residents calling themselves the Shaka Movement sidestepped the company-friendly council and launched a ballot initiative that called for a moratorium on all GMO farming until a full environmental impact statement is completed there.

The companies, primarily Monsanto, spent \$7.2m on the campaign (\$327.95 per “no” vote, reported to be the most expensive political campaign in Hawaii history) and still lost.

Again, they sued in federal court, and, a judge found that the Maui County initiative was preempted by federal law. Those rulings are also being appealed.

In the state legislature in Honolulu, Senator Josh Green, a Democrat who then chaired the health committee, earlier this year attempted a fourth effort at curbing the pesticide spraying.

In the legislature, he said, it's an open secret that most heads of the agriculture committee have had “a closer relationship with the agro-chemical companies than with the environmental groups”.

Green, an emergency room doctor who was raised in Pennsylvania, drafted legislation to mandate some prior disclosure and some buffer zones. “I thought that was a reasonable compromise,” he says. Still, he also drafted a weaker bill as a failsafe. “If even that one doesn't pass, it's going to be obvious that the state doesn't have the political will to stand up to the chemical companies,” he said in a phone interview at the time. “That would be terrible.”

The chairman of the senate agricultural committee, Cliff Tsuji, didn't even bring the weaker bill to a vote, even though Hawaii's governor had pledged to sign any bill that created buffer zones.

Asked by email what he would do now, Green replied with a quip: “Drink scotch.”

This article was amended on 12 October 2015. An earlier version stated that a Center for Food Safety report found pesticides were used in Kauai at 17 times the US mainland average for cornfields. It was restricted-use insecticides, not all pesticides. Also, atrazine and paraquat are among the chemicals sprayed in Kauai but don't constitute a majority. This has been corrected. *This report was supported by a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism.*

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EU agrees total ban on bee-harming pesticides

The world's most widely used insecticides will be banned from all fields within six months, to protect both wild and honeybees that are vital to crop pollination

Damian Carrington *Environment editor*

Fri 27 Apr 2018 05.47 EDT

The European Union will ban the world's most widely used insecticides from all fields due to the serious danger they pose to bees.

The ban on neonicotinoids, approved by member nations on Friday, is expected to come into force by the end of 2018 and will mean they can only be used in closed greenhouses.

Bees and other insects are vital for global food production as they pollinate three-quarters of all crops. The plummeting numbers of pollinators in recent years has been blamed, in part, on the widespread use of pesticides. The EU banned the use of neonicotinoids on flowering crops that attract bees, such as oil seed rape, in 2013.

But in February, a major report from the European Union's scientific risk assessors (Efsa) concluded that the high risk to both honeybees and wild bees resulted from any outdoor use,

because the pesticides contaminate soil and water. This leads to the pesticides appearing in wildflowers or succeeding crops. A recent study of honey samples revealed global contamination by neonicotinoids.

Vytenis Andriukaitis, European commissioner for Health and Food Safety, welcomed Friday's vote: "The commission had proposed these measures months ago, on the basis of the scientific advice from Efsa. Bee health remains of paramount importance for me since it concerns biodiversity, food production and the environment."

The ban on the three main neonicotinoids has widespread public support, with almost 5 million people signing a petition from campaign group Avaaz. "Banning these toxic pesticides is a beacon of hope for bees," said Antonia Staats at Avaaz. "Finally, our governments are listening to their citizens, the scientific evidence and farmers who know that bees can't live with these chemicals and we can't live without bees."

Martin Dermine, at Pesticide Action Network Europe, said: "Authorising neonicotinoids a quarter of a century ago was a mistake and led to an environmental disaster. Today's vote is historic."

However, the pesticide manufacturers and some farming groups have accused the EU of being overly cautious and suggested crop yields could fall, a claim rejected by others. "European agriculture will suffer as a result of this decision," said Graeme Taylor, at the European Crop Protection Association. "Perhaps not today, perhaps not tomorrow, but in time decision makers will see the clear impact of removing a vital tool for farmers."

The UK's National Farmers' Union (NFU) said the ban was regrettable and not justified by the evidence. Guy Smith, NFU deputy president, said: "The pest problems that neonicotinoids helped farmers tackle have not gone away. There is a real risk that these restrictions will do nothing measurable to improve bee health, while compromising the effectiveness of crop protection."

A spokesman for the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs welcomed the ban, but added: "We recognise the impact a ban will have on farmers and will continue to work with them to explore alternative approaches." In November, UK environment secretary Michael Gove overturned the UK's previous opposition to a full outdoor ban.

Neonicotinoids, which are nerve agents, have been shown to cause a wide range of harm to individual bees, such as damaging memory and reducing queen numbers.

But this evidence has strengthened recently to show damage to colonies of bees. Other research has also revealed that 75% of all flying insects have disappeared in Germany and probably much further afield, prompting warnings of "ecological armageddon".

Prof Dave Goulson, at the University of Sussex, said the EU ban was logical given the weight of evidence but that disease and lack of flowery habitats were also harming bees. "Also, if these neonicotinoids are simply replaced by other similar compounds, then we will simply be going round in circles. What is needed is a move towards truly sustainable farming," he said.

Some experts are worried that the exemption for greenhouses means neonicotinoids will be washed out into water courses, where they can severely harm aquatic life.

Prof Jeroen van der Sluijs, at the University of Bergen, Norway, said neonicotinoids will also continue to be used in flea treatments for pets and in stables and animal transport vehicles, which

account for about a third of all uses: “Environmental pollution will continue.”

The EU decision could have global ramifications, according to Prof Nigel Raine, at the University of Guelph in Canada: “Policy makers in other jurisdictions will be paying close attention to these decisions. We rely on both farmers and pollinators for the food we eat. Pesticide regulation is a balancing act between unintended consequences of their use for non-target organisms, including pollinators, and giving farmers the tools they need to control crop pests.”

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'Catastrophe' as France's bird population collapses due to pesticides

Dozens of species have seen their numbers decline, in some cases by two-thirds, because insects they feed on have disappeared

Agence France-Presse

Tue 20 Mar 2018 20.50 EDT

Bird populations across the French countryside have fallen by a third over the last decade and a half, researchers have said.

Dozens of species have seen their numbers decline, in some cases by two-thirds, the scientists said in a pair of studies - one national in scope and the other covering a large agricultural region in central France.

“The situation is catastrophic,” said Benoit Fontaine, a conservation biologist at France’s National Museum of Natural History and co-author of one of the studies.

“Our countryside is in the process of becoming a veritable desert,” he said in a communique released by the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), which also contributed to the

findings.

The common white throat, the ortolan bunting, the Eurasian skylark and other once-ubiquitous species have all fallen off by at least a third, according a detailed, annual census initiated at the start of the century.

A migratory song bird, the meadow pipit, has declined by nearly 70%.

The museum described the pace and extent of the wipe-out as “a level approaching an ecological catastrophe”.

The primary culprit, researchers speculate, is the intensive use of pesticides on vast tracts of monoculture crops, especially wheat and corn.

The problem is not that birds are being poisoned, but that the insects on which they depend for food have disappeared.

“There are hardly any insects left, that’s the number one problem,” said Vincent Bretagnolle, a CNRS ecologist at the Centre for Biological Studies in Chize.

Recent research, he noted, has uncovered similar trends across Europe, estimating that flying insects have declined by 80%, and bird populations has dropped by more than 400m in 30 years.

Despite a government plan to cut pesticide use in half by 2020, sales in France have climbed steadily, reaching more than 75,000 tonnes of active ingredient in 2014, according to European Union figures.

“What is really alarming, is that all the birds in an agricultural setting are declining at the same speed, even ‘generalist’ birds,” which also thrive in other settings such as wooded areas, said Bretagnolle.

“That shows that the overall quality of the agricultural eco-system is deteriorating.”

Figures from the national survey - which relies on a network of hundreds of volunteer ornithologists - indicate the die-off gathered pace in 2016 and 2017.

Drivers of the drop in bird populations extend beyond the depletion of their main food source, the scientists said.

Shrinking woodlands, the absence of the once common practice of letting fields lie fallow and especially rapidly expanding expanses of mono-crops have each played a role.

“If the situation is not yet irreversible, all the actors in the agriculture sector must work together to change their practices,” Fontaine said.

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Europe faces 'biodiversity oblivion' after collapse in French birds, experts warn

Authors of report on bird declines say intensive farming and pesticides could turn Europe's farmland into a desert that ultimately imperils all humans

Patrick Barkham

Wed 21 Mar 2018 11.31 EDT

The “catastrophic” decline in French farmland birds signals a wider biodiversity crisis in Europe which ultimately imperils all humans, leading scientists have told the Guardian.

A dramatic fall in farmland birds such as skylarks, whitethroats and ortolan bunting in France was revealed by two studies this week, with the spread of neonicotinoid pesticides - and decimation of insect life - coming under particular scrutiny.

With intensive crop production encouraged by the EU's common agricultural policy apparently driving the bird declines, conservationists are warning that many European countries are facing a second “silent spring” - a term coined by the ecologist Rachel Carson to describe the slump in bird populations in the 1960s caused by pesticides.

“We’ve lost a quarter of skylarks in 15 years. It’s huge, it’s really, really huge. If this was the human population, it would be a major thing,” said Dr Benoit Fontaine of France’s National Museum of Natural History and co-author of one of the new studies, a national survey of France’s common birds. “We are turning our farmland into a desert. We are losing everything and we need that nature, that biodiversity - the agriculture needs pollinators and the soil fauna. Without that, ultimately, we will die.”

Farmland makes up 45% of the EU’s land area, but farmland bird populations in France have fallen by an average of a third over the past 15 years. In some cases, the declines are worse: seven out of 10 meadow pipits have disappeared from French fields over that period, while eight in 10 partridges have vanished over 23 years, according to a second French study which examined 160 areas of typical arable plains in central France.



A meadow pipit. Photograph: Stephane Bouilland/Biosphoto/Alamy

According to the survey, the disappearance of farmland species intensified in the last decade, and again over the last two summers.

Thriving generalist species such as wood pigeons, blackbirds and chaffinches - which also breed in urban areas and woodlands - are increasing nationally but even they are decreasing on farmland, which has led researchers to identify changing farming practices as the cause of big declines.

Scientists point to the correlation between bird declines and the drastic reduction in insect life - such as the 76% fall in abundance of flying insects on German nature reserves over 27 years - which are linked to increasing pesticides and neonicotinoids in particular.

Despite the French government aspiring to halve pesticide use by 2020, sales have climbed, reaching more than 75,000 tonnes of active ingredient in 2014, according to EU figures.

“All birds are dependant on insects in one way or another,” said Fontaine. “Even granivorous birds feed their chicks insects and birds of prey eat birds that eat insects. If you lose 80% of what you eat you cannot sustain a stable population.”

Fontaine said that EU agri-environment were “obviously not” reversing bird declines but he said farmers were not to blame and it was possible to farm to produce food and preserve wildlife.

“Farmers are really willing to do that,” said Fontaine. “They live with a system which is based on large firms that make pesticides and they have to cope with that. They are not the bad guys. The

problem is not agriculture, but the solution is really the farmers.”

The declines in France mirror falls across Europe: the abundance of farmland birds in 28 European countries has fallen by 55% in the past three decades, according to figures collated by the European Bird Census Council.

Among 39 species commonly found on European farmland, 24 have declined and only six have increased. The white stork is one of the few success stories, with its revival linked to an increase in artificial nesting sites being provided in towns.

Iván Ramírez, head of conservation for BirdLife Europe & Central Asia, warned that Europe is facing “biodiversity oblivion” on its farmland, with scientific studies attributing the loss of birds to EU farming subsidies. According to Ramírez, countries which have recently joined the EU show declines in farmland birds, while populations have fared better in non-EU states in eastern Europe, where agricultural practices became less intensive after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Martin Harper, director of conservation for the RSPB in the UK, said: “In the UK the situation is just as concerning. Our beleaguered farmland birds have declined by 56% between 1970 and 2015 along with declines in other wildlife linked to changes in agricultural practices, including the use of pesticides. We urgently need action on both sides of the Channel, and this is something we hope to see from the governments of the UK as we prepare to leave the EU.”

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Widespread Glyphosate Contamination in Wine

POSTED BY ZEN HONEYCUTT 2675.40GS ON MARCH 24, 2016

100% of Wine Tested Showed Positive Results



Los Angeles - Today, Moms Across America released new results revealing that ten major California wines contained the chemical glyphosate, the declared “active” ingredient in Roundup weedkiller and 700 other glyphosate-based herbicides. Glyphosate, deemed a probable carcinogen by the World Health Organization in 2015, was found in all three categories of wine. This includes conventional (chemically grown), organic and biodynamic wine. The methodology used for the testing was the same as the beer tests in Germany, where all 14 beers tested positive for glyphosate. The highest conventional wine test result for glyphosate was 28 times higher than the glyphosate levels found in the organic and biodynamic wines.

View the report

here: [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/yesmaam/pages/680/attachments/original/1458848651/3-24-16_GlyphosateContaminationinWineReport_\(1\).pdf?1458848651](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/yesmaam/pages/680/attachments/original/1458848651/3-24-16_GlyphosateContaminationinWineReport_(1).pdf?1458848651)

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Because Roundup/glyphosate is not permitted on organic or biodynamic vineyards, the results are unexpected and can only be explained by the drift of chemical sprays from neighboring vineyards. This could mean legal ramifications for the contamination and devaluation of another company's product.

Zen Honeycutt, Director of Moms Across America, states "We have recently learned that the detection of glyphosate is an indicator of the presence of many other co-formulants in glyphosate-based herbicides which, combined, are 1000 times more toxic than glyphosate alone. French scientist Gilles-Éric Seralini (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilles-%C3%89ric_S%C3%A9ralini) and his team have also discovered that these co-formulants are also endocrine hormone disruptors, which can lead to breast cancer, miscarriages, birth defects and many other health issues. There should be zero glyphosate and related chemicals in our wine, food or personal products."

Consumers may wonder how Roundup/glyphosate is getting into their wine. Roundup/glyphosate is sprayed every year in conventional vineyards. A 1-2 ft strip is sprayed on either side of the grape vines which are planted in rows, to kill weeds when the vines are dormant in late winter or early spring. According to plant pathologist, Don Huber from Purdue University, the vine stems are inevitably sprayed in this process and the Roundup is likely absorbed through the roots and bark of the vines from where it is translocated into the leaves and grapes.

All the wines tested were from the Napa Valley, Sonoma and Mendocino County areas. According to the CA Dept of Health, breast cancer rates in the Sonoma, Napa and Mendocino counties is 10 to 20 percent higher than the national average. 700 lawsuits are currently pending against Monsanto for the connection between non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and Roundup.

Currently the FDA does not require end product testing or labeling for pesticides. Therefore the public is unable to know the type or amount of any pesticides that are present in the wines.

Moms Across America and other groups call for the protection of organic and biodynamic brands, farm workers and consumers by requesting that all food producers STOP spraying toxic chemicals on their crops.

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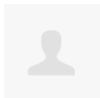


Eddie Warne commented

1 month ago (2018-06-21T20:09:09Z)

I wrote a new blog on glyphosate with emphasis on the tech companies who have worked so hard to invent technologies that will prevent spray drift and only spray the weeds,

<http://mostpopularhashtags.com/2018/05/30/glyphosate-hashtags/>
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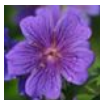
1 year ago (2016-08-19T20:24:21Z)



Garry Cohen commented

2 years ago (2016-03-28T02:26:14Z)

I am a rarity in the wine business in that I do not use glyphosate in my vineyard. We spend twice as much time per vine as "typical" vineyards because of the need to hand trim the cover crops around the base of each of the vines. Yet, I still worry as neighboring farmers continue to spray their crops with glyphosate with impunity. www.mazzarothvineyard.com



Ellie Kirchner commented

2 years ago (2016-03-26T02:28:37Z)

Glyphosate should be banned. Hopefully the wine drinkers of the world will urge the winemakers of the world to stop using glyphosate and work to ban this

poisonous herbicide from being used. Here are other crops that are sprayed with glyphosate, as recommended by Monsanto.



Zen Honeycutt commented

2 years ago (2016-03-24T20:21:41Z)

Please note that many have asked for the names of the brands. Our response: The supporter who gave us the results of the wine testing has not agreed to release brand information at this time. However, the issue is not the brand, it is the impact of chemical farming and the widespread contamination of consumer products. These results show that any vineyard using these toxic chemicals can expect that their wines and their neighbors' wines will be contaminated with glyphosate based herbicides.

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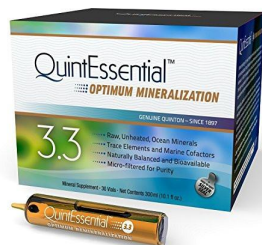
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