

Neonicotinoid insecticides residues in our food!

Générations Futures and Pesticide Action Network Europe prove that our food contains residues of neonicotinoid family of insecticides implicated in the decline of bee colonies and urges the French Government as well as the European Union to take firm bans.

Background. Although the European Union just decided to restrict the use of three neonicotinoid insecticides - clothianidin, imidacloprid, thiamethoxam- for 2 years, the problem with these insecticides is not resolved, far from it. They will remain authorized on many crops and in greenhouses.

The Investigation. To show that the use of neonicotinoids is beyond the usages of these three products now restricted, and that human and environmental exposure to these products continues despite the recent decision, we decided to conduct an analysis based on vegetables food. Therefore, we sought the top 5 neonicotinoids between February and May 2013. In total 109 samples were analyzed.

The results are clear: the tested food frequently contains, to varying degrees, neonicotinoid residues.

- 45% of zucchini samples contained residues of neonicotinoids (9/20: 9 residues of imidacloprid)
- 25% of tomato samples contained residues of neonicotinoids (5/20: 2 acetamiprid, thiacloprid 2, 1 acetamiprid + thiacloprid)
- 80% of tea samples contained residues of neonicotinoids (8/10: 5 + acetamiprid imidacloprid, acetamiprid 3) with 4 MRL exceedances (3 acetamiprid, imidacloprid 1)
- 12.24% of strawberry samples contained residues of neonicotinoids (6/49: 4 thiacloprid thiametoxam 1, 1 acetamiprid (prohibited use strawberries F))
- 16.66% of the eggplant samples contained residues of neonicotinoids (1/6: 1 imidacloprid)

What about bees?

We tried for "fun" to convert our results imagining what would happen if bees were exposed to the residue levels found in our samples. If we take the example of a zucchini containing 25 mg imidacloprid/kg our calculations allow us to conclude that it would mean 845 dead bees and at least 3,788 disrupted bees.

"These results show that despite the first decisions taken by the European Commission, neonicotinoids will continue to be poured in large quantities into the environment or used in seed coating despite the initial ban ... so they can continue to contaminate pollinators and humans through air, food, water This last point is of particular concern as very recent studies show that these molecules can affect the development of the brain and show genotoxic potential." declared François Veillerette, spokesman of Générations Futures and President of the Brussels based NGO ,Pesticides Action Network Europe.

"These results also show that we eat every day residues of these neonicotinoids. Faced with this double threat we have only one request: the total prohibition of this family of insecticides!" He concluded.

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The complete dossier online here: <http://www.generations-futures.fr/pesticides/alerte-aux-insecticides-neonicotinoides-dans-nos-aliments/> (only in French for the moment)