

EU “independent” bee task force chair plotted to blame neonicotinoids for deaths then cook research to fit PR plan

Research blaming pesticides for the decline in honeybees has been called into question by a [leaked note suggesting that scientists had decided in advance to seek evidence supporting a ban on the chemicals](#).

**[NOTE: Also read [Hank Campbell's analysis](#) of this emerging scandal on the GLP in today's Daily Digest. [Environmentalist Bjorn Lomborg](#) has his take on the story on his site. The Genetic Literacy Project will have a more extensive report on this breaking story on Friday, December 5.]**

**[Note: The Genetic Literacy Project's Jon Entine has reported extensively on the manipulation of research on bee health by activist scientists, most recently the inside story on [Harvard nutritionist and organic activist Chensheng Lu, here](#).]**

The private note records a discussion in 2010 between four scientists about how to persuade regulators to ban neonicotinoid pesticides.

The EU imposed a temporary ban last year after the European Food Safety Authority identified risks to bees. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs opposed the ban, saying that there was not enough evidence of harm to bees.

Many farmers have blamed the ban for high levels of damage to this winter's oilseed rape crop from flea beetle.

The [leaked note](#) says that the scientists agreed to select authors to produce four papers and co-ordinate their publication to “obtain the necessary policy change, to have these pesticides banned”.

A paper by a “carefully selected first author” would set out the impact of the pesticides on insects and birds “as convincingly as possible”. A second “policy forum” paper would draw on the first to call for a ban.

The note, which records that the meeting took place in Switzerland on June 14, 2010, says: “If we are successful in getting these two papers published, there will be enormous impact, and a campaign led by WWF etc. It will be much harder for politicians to ignore a research paper and a policy forum paper in [a major scientific journal].”

The scientists at the meeting included Maarten Bijleveld van Lexmond, chairman of the Task Force on Systemic Pesticides, and Piet Wit, chairman of the ecosystems management commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, an influential network of scientists and environmental groups.

The Task Force, a group of scientists who advise the IUCN, published a report in June stating that neonicotinoids were “causing significant damage to a wide range of beneficial invertebrate species and are a key factor in the decline of bees”.

**Read full, original article:** [Scientists accused of plotting to get pesticides banned](#)