

European science academy links neonics to harm of many beneficial insects, not just bees

An influential European scientific body said on Wednesday that a group of pesticides believed to contribute to mass deaths of [honeybees](#) is probably more damaging to ecosystems than previously thought and questioned whether the substances had a place in sustainable agriculture.

The finding could have repercussions on both sides of the Atlantic for the companies that produce the chemicals, which are known as neonicotinoids.

Research has been directed largely at the effects of neonicotinoids on honeybees, but that focus “has distorted the debate,” according to the report released on Wednesday by the European Academies Science Advisory Council.

The council is an independent body composed of representatives from the national science academies of European Union member states.

A growing body of evidence shows that the widespread use of the pesticides “has severe effects on a range of organisms that provide ecosystem services like pollination and natural pest control, as well as on biodiversity,” the report’s authors said.

Predatory insects like parasitic wasps and ladybugs provide billions of dollars’ worth of insect control, they noted, and organisms like earthworms contribute billions more through improved soil productivity. All are harmed by the pesticides.

“This is not new research or even a meaningful review of all the studies available,” Jean-Charles Bocquet, director general of the European Crop Protection Association, said in a statement. “Rather, it is a misleading and very selective reading of some of the literature, especially from organizations well known for their opposition to neonicotinoids.”

Read full, original article: [Pesticides Linked to Honeybee Deaths Pose More Risks, European Group Says](#)