

## USDA rebukes EPA for claiming neonics provide no 'clear' farmer benefits

During a public comment period for a review of the use of neonicotinoids by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Robert Johansson, acting chief economist for USDA, sharply contested the EPA's preliminary conclusion that the class of protection chemicals provides no "clear or consistent" benefits to soybean farmers:

On October 22, 2014, EPA added an additional and unnecessary burden by publishing a portion of an incomplete risk assessment titled Benefits of Neonicotinoid Seed Treatments to Soybean Production which again puts growers in the position of defending their pest management decisions. USDA staff had specifically requested EPA to complete the full risk assessment that would more robustly describe the benefits of neonicotinoid seed treatment for all crops. Instead, EPA released the report regarding soybean seed treatment without additional consideration of other crops or to USDA cautions about releasing a premature assessment of the costs and benefits of such seed treatments.

EPA's release of the incomplete report has resulted in a plethora of articles which cast doubt on the value of seed treatment and neonicotinoids for agricultural production and the choices made by farmers... EPA concludes that there... are no clear or consistent economic benefits of neonicotinoid seed treatments in soybeans. As a whole, USDA disagrees with that assessment. We believe that pest management strategies are made in consideration of pest pressures, climate, landscape, and numerous other factors.

For full draft of the letter, please click on original post.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Chief Economist  
Room 112-A J.L. Whitten Building  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-3810

April 6, 2015

Mr. Richard Keigwin  
Director, Pesticide Re-evaluation Division  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460-0001

Re: USDA Public Comments on the EPA's *Benefits of Neonicotinoid Seed Treatments to Soybean Production* document published in the October 22, 2014 Federal Register; EPA docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0737.

Dear Mr. Keigwin:

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post:** [Comment submitted by Robert Johansson, Acting Chief Economist, Office of the Chief Economist, United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) on Benefits of Neonicotinoid Seed Treatment to Soybean Production: Reopening of Comment Period](#)