

Was activist scientist Jonathan Lundgren, neonicotinoid critic, silenced by USDA?

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

As a USDA-ARS employee, [Jonathan] Lundgren has run his own lab and staff for 11 years. . . For years, his body of research was either neutral or favorable to farming policy and the chemical industry. But three years ago, he started cautioning against the overuse of pesticides. That shift, he says, triggered his suspensions and the downturn in his professional fate.

He believes the problem began in 2012, when he published findings. . . suggesting that a popular class of pesticides called neonicotinoids don't improve soybean yields. He also served as a peer reviewer for a Center for Food Safety report on the dangers of neonics. The next year, he published a paper suggesting that a new genetic pest treatment, dubbed RNAi pesticides, required a new means of risk assessment.

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Jeff Ruch, the executive director at Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility who has been representing Lundgren, says the [USDA's report on Lundgren's scientific integrity complaint] reveals a systemic problem inside the agency: "No witnesses named by Lundgren were interviewed," Ruch says. "The panel was told not to even consider allegations of reprisal. And they also repeated USDA's position that they can prohibit any scientist from talking to the media even about already published research, which completely undermines any claim of scientific freedom."

A USDA spokesperson said: "The documents that this organization has released affirm that the referenced allegation of scientific misconduct at USDA is untrue and misleading. Both the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Agency scientific integrity officer and an independent USDA scientific integrity review panel have reviewed the allegation and found it to be unsubstantiated. . . ."

Read full, original post: [Was a USDA scientist muzzled because of his bee research?](#)