

Contrary to EPA, new report finds neonicotinoids boost yields in soybean fields

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

The class of insecticides called neonicotinoids (neonics) were introduced to a lot of fanfare from farmers and environmentalists alike. They were seen as far less toxic than alternative pesticides, and could be applied into the soil or on seeds, avoiding the damage to beneficial insects that's often caused by sprays.

But recently, a number of environmental groups and scientists have expressed concern over neonics and their possible impact on honey bees. . . .

In 2014, the EPA issued a report stating that soybean growers who use seeds that were treated with neonics before planting did not experience any economic benefit from the practice. . . .

However, the EPA came under harsh criticism for its report, including responses from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the [American Soybean Association](#). Also, scientists from Mississippi State University [discovered that pest pressure](#) played a strong role in establishing an economic threshold for using neonics, at least on rice.

The same scientists, led by Jeff Gore. . . recently evaluated 170 field trials on soybean fields in four southern states . . . Their meta-analysis appears in the [Journal of Economic Entomology](#).

Gore and his colleagues discovered that treating soybean seeds with neonics (imidacloprid or thiamethoxam) and a fungicide provided higher yields than seed treatments using a fungicide only. . . .

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However, he noted that the average yield improvements, while statistically significant, were not dramatic . . . He predicts that many scientists may argue that these benefits were not high enough to cross the economic threshold important to IPM. . . .

[Yet] the scientists argue that enough instances of higher yield made neonic seed treatment a beneficial practice.

Read full, original post: [Treating Southern Soybeans with Neonicotinoids Yields Economic Benefits After All](#)