

EPA finds neonic seed treatments safe for most crops, but questions remain about cotton, citrus

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The Environmental Protection Agency, which I have described elsewhere as “[the worst regulatory agency in the history of the world](#),” sometimes does get things right. Well, sort of right.

That’s what happened earlier this year when it issued its “preliminary assessment” of imidacloprid, the first commercially available, widely used neonicotinoid pesticide (“neonic,” for short).

Neonics—90% of which are applied as seed-treatments. . .—are taken up into the plant so that they target only the pests that feed on the crop, minimizing exposure to humans, animals, and beneficial insects. . . .

. . . .

Uncharacteristically, EPA’s imidacloprid assessment reached conclusions that were good news for farmers and the agriculture sector—and devastating to many activists. . . .

Three significant conclusions in the EPA’s assessment will be a boon to America’s farmers. First, it exonerated imidacloprid seed treatments from posing a risk to honeybees. The tiny residues detectable in the pollen and nectar that are found in treated crops are too small to do significant harm to the bees. . . .

Second, the EPA determined that there was a “No Observable Adverse Effects Level” (NOAEL) for honeybee exposure to imidacloprid of 25 parts per billion (ppb). . . . This finding is significant because neonic residue levels in nectar and pollen for imidacloprid seed-treated crops typically fall in single digits of ppb. . . .

Third, the EPA’s assessment found that neonic residue levels in corn, the largest U.S. crop and biggest neonic user, posed no problem for bees. . . .

But the EPA’s assessment wasn’t so favorable (or accurate) for two other crops. . . . In reaching its conclusions about cotton and citrus—two crops for which neonics are considered essential—the EPA ignored persuasive scientific evidence to the contrary.

Read full, original post: [The EPA Bows To Activists](#)