

RALLY TO BEE-AWARE OF TOXIC NEONICS

Beekeepers have been saying for years that they see a link between neonicotinoid pesticides and bee die-offs, but the recent deaths of 50,000 bees near Portland are finally giving pesticide foes some traction: A federal bill, the "Save America's Pollinators Act of 2013" was introduced on July 16. A "Nix the Neonics" rally is planned for noon July 20 at the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza in downtown Eugene. The 30-minute rally will be followed by a carpool to an as-of-yet unnamed garden store that has refused to stop selling neonicotinoid pesticides, organizers say.

The rally will include a funeral march for the "Wilsonville Bumblebee Massacre of 2013," information on the toxics, a neonicotinoid scavenger hunt and a sing-along including a rousing rendition of an anti-neonicotinoid song, sung to the tune of Schoolhouse Rock's "Lolly, Lolly, Lolly, Get Your Adverbs Here." Bee costumes and beekeeper suits are "heartily encouraged."

Oregon Rep. Earl Blumenauer's new bill would "suspend registration for certain neonicotinoid pesticides and perform a new evaluation of their impacts on pollinators." Josh Vincent of the Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides, one of the groups supporting the bill, says NCAP will provide postcards at Saturday's rally for people to encourage their legislators to co-sponsor the bill.

Vincent says that given how long people have known the dangers of neonics, "It's surprising it's taken this long to have folks moving on it," and he also encourages people to thank Blumenauer for his bill.

Beekeepers Philip Smith and Doug Hornaday, who are among the organizers of the rally, say the problem with neonics is that it's not a single exposure that affects the bees, it's that the chemical builds up in their system over time. They say the EPA's way of approving pesticides is based on the older organophosphates and doesn't reflect the cumulative effects of the neonics.

Incidents such as Wilsonville where the bees fell dead out of the sky are rare, but as bee advocates Scotty Perey and Jennifer Frenzer point out, while it's tragic for bees, it also calls attention to the massive loss of bees across the world. After the Oregon bee die-offs, the Oregon Department of Agriculture announced a temporary restriction on the use of 18 pesticides containing the neonicotinoid dinotefuran while it investigates the Portland bee deaths earlier this month.

Frenzer says the public is ready to ban the neonics. She handed out flyers while dressed as a bee at the recent Oregon Country Fair and says people were coming up to her to get the information and find out more.

The July 20 rally will feature members of Oregon Sustainable Beekeepers, Beyond Toxics, Healthy Bees = Healthy Gardens and the Occupy Eugene Library. For more info go to wkly.ws/lij or search "Nix the Neonics" on Facebook. — *Camilla Mortensen*

PETITION TO BAN GM CROPS IN LANE COUNTY

The local fight against genetically modified crops is on. Citizens' group Support Local Food Rights (SLFR) submitted a local food system ordinance to the Lane County clerk. The initiative would ban the planting of genetically modified (GM) crops and establish the right to a local food system.

Opponents of GM crops are concerned with a host of issues: increased pesticide use, the lack of a long-term study of their safety for consumption and unwanted cross-pollination ruining local organic crops and causing unintentional patent infringement.

Attorney Ann Kneeland of SLFR says that communities should have the right to protect local agriculture, which GM crops endanger financially and legally. "They are a technology that contaminates other crops, and without protections to keep those crops out of areas where conventional and organic crops are being grown, those other crops are not safe," she says. After contamination with GM varieties, organic crops are no longer vendible as organic, and all farms can be sued for growing patented crops.

Perhaps the best-known GM crops are Monsanto's Roundup Ready varieties of soybeans, alfalfa, corn, canola, cotton and sugar beets. These crops are engineered to tolerate Monsanto's Roundup pesticide, which GM opponents say results in more pesticide use.

Increased pesticide usage on GM crops in the Corn Belt has killed off the weaker varieties of pests and weeds, leaving only the pesticide-resistant organisms to breed, which leads to more usage of pesticides like Roundup. "What's happened is that pests and weeds are becoming increasingly resistant to pesticides because of the repeated use of the very same



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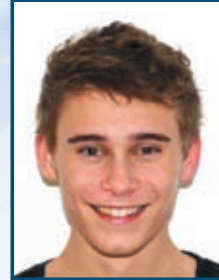
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