What are the benefits of neonicotinoid seed treatments?

Neonicotinoids are highly valued by growers who use them in integrated pest management (IPM) programs. They provide a unique mode of action, necessary to manage pests resistant to other insecticides. Neonicotinoids selectively control insect pests, while ensuring beneficial insects remain available to keep other potential insect pests in check.

A comprehensive economic analysis of more than 1,500 field studies conducted over 20 years by AgInfomatics finds neonicotinoid insecticides provided average yield increases ranging from 3.6 percent to 71.3 percent in eight major crops across North America. This research found the average yield benefit of using neonicotinoids far exceeds the cost of treatment and delivers a substantial economic return on investment to the farmer.

Many groups are working to improve bee health.

The crop protection and seed industries are working in a number of areas to protect and improve the health of honey bees. We are partnering with other organizations in the Honey Bee Health Coalition, which is working to improve pollinator habitat and forage, creating and disseminating hive management tools and developing strategies to control crop pests while safeguarding pollinator health.

Farmers and beekeepers depend on each other where bees are needed to help pollinate crops. The farmer gets greater crop productivity and the beekeeper earns a fee for pollination.

What is the industry doing to make seed treatments safer for pollinators and other wildlife?

Seed treatments, such as those with neonicotinoid pesticides, undergo rigorous testing and review by the EPA prior to being permitted to be used commercially. In addition, industry is constantly evolving to improve seed treatment processes such as:

- Enhancing seed coating polymers and application processes to keep active ingredients on the seed and reduce dust-off.
- Developing new flow agents for use with planting equipment to further minimize the amount of dust-off during planting.
- Implementing an ISO planting equipment standard to better control dust emissions.
Follow Directions
Follow directions on treated seed container labeling for handling, storage, planting and disposal practices.
Ensure any spilled seeds are removed or covered by soil to protect wildlife and the environment.

Minimize Dust
Use advanced seed flow lubricants that minimize dust.

Clean and Remove
Completely remove all treated seed left in containers and equipment used to handle harvested grain, and dispose of it properly. Keep all treated seed out of the commodity grain channels.

Eliminate Weeds
Eliminate flowering plants and weeds in and around the field prior to planting.

BeeAware
At planting, be aware of honey bees and hives located near the field, and communicate with beekeepers when possible.

For detailed information about stewardship of treated seed, check out seed-treatment-guide.com