



## The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP

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Minister for Agriculture  
Federal Member for New England

Ref: MC15-005414

Mr Stephen Targett  
Crop Pollination Association Inc.  
PO Box 325  
NARRANDERA NSW 2700

Dear Mr Targett

Thank you for your correspondence of 26 June 2015 regarding chemical labelling. I understand the APVMA is also responding to your concerns.

I am aware that the Australian bee industry makes a significant contribution to the agriculture sector in this country.

Before an agricultural chemical or a veterinary medicine (agvet chemical) is able to be sold in Australia, it must be assessed by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). The APVMA assesses potential risks that the chemicals pose to human and animal health, occupational health and safety, the environment and trade. The assessment includes evaluation data and approval of labels. Labels contain adequate instructions for the safe and effective use of products, storage, disposal and handling instructions, compatibility and spray drift instructions. For example, as you have noted, to protect pollinators such as honey bees, where relevant, label instructions state that users must not spray plants in flower while bees are foraging. These labels utilise where possible approved standardised wording and are legally enforceable.

While the APVMA regulates agricultural chemicals prior to their sale, state and territory governments regulate the use of those registered pesticides. Concerns you have regarding chemical use should be made to the states and territories. The New South Wales Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is the Primary Environmental regulator for New South Wales and can be contacted on 131 558.

In February 2014, the APVMA published an overview report on bee health and the use of neonicotinoid insecticides in Australia. The report confirmed that in Australia, honey bee populations are not in decline and insecticides are not a highly significant issue, even though they can be toxic to bees if used incorrectly or not according to label instructions. The APVMA is also considering further options to reduce the risks to bees in Australia from the use of all insecticides and not just neonicotinoids. This report is available at [archive.apvma.gov.au/news\\_media/chemicals/bee\\_and\\_neonicotinoids.php](http://archive.apvma.gov.au/news_media/chemicals/bee_and_neonicotinoids.php).

On 16 July 2014, the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee (the committee) tabled a report the *Future of the beekeeping and pollination services industries in Australia*. For further information on the report [http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Rural\\_and\\_Regional\\_Affairs\\_and\\_Transport/Beekeeping/Report/index](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Rural_and_Regional_Affairs_and_Transport/Beekeeping/Report/index).

I recently announced a new national survey of Australia's honey industry. The survey is designed to collect information about the economic and financial situation of bee-keepers as well as data on the honey they produce. The survey will also capture the adoption of research and development initiatives, the state of honey bee health and the size of the commercial pollination services sector

I welcome the development of new technology that is designed to enhance agricultural production through the full benefits from honey bee production. It was recently brought to my attention that a smart-phone application named BeeConnected developed by CropLife Australia Limited is capable of assisting with pollinator protection through collaboration between beekeepers, farmers and spray service contractors. I note that the application allows beekeepers, farmers and contractors to work together to ensure the long term viability and vitality of Australia's honey bees.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely



Barnaby Joyce MP

11 July 2014