

US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Threatening and Censoring Scientists Exposing Bee Death Epidemic

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A formal letter to the United States Department of Agriculture [reports](#) that scientists are being harassed and their research on bee-killing pesticides is being censored or suppressed by the Monsanto-infiltrated agency (the USDA). Surprised, anyone?

At least we are organizing formally against a scourge that has been painfully obvious for years now. A broad coalition of farmers, environmentalists, fisheries and food-safety organizations (over 25 citizens' groups) urged an investigation into the USDA's support of the chemical industry over the American public in a [May 5 letter](#) sent to Phyllis K. Fong, USDA Inspector General.

It [states](#):

"The possibility that the USDA is prioritizing the interests of the chemical industry over those of the American public is unacceptable."

The group is concerned that a forthcoming report by the White House Task Force on Pollinator Health, which is co-chaired by the USDA, is compromised. The signatories of the letter to the USDA include the American Bird Conservancy, Avaaz, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, Farmworkers Association of Florida, Food and Water Watch, Friends of the Earth, Green America, Organic Consumers Association and Sierra Club.

Could it be? Yes, it certainly could be – here's why:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has been essentially taken over by an outside organization – biotechnology giant and GMO crop-creator, Monsanto. RootsAction has launched a campaign [demanding a Congressional investigation](#).

Want specific examples?

How Monsanto has Taken over the USDA

Monsanto's growth hormones for cows was approved by Michael Taylor, a former Monsanto lobbyist who turned into the USDA administrator and FDA deputy commissioner. This was after Margaret Miller, a former Monsanto employee, oversaw a report on the hormones safety and then took a job at the FDA where she approved her self-penned report.

[Islam Siddiqui](#), a former Monsanto lobbyist, wrote the USDA's food standards that allow corporations to label irradiated and genetically engineered foods as "organic."

Furthermore, President Obama signed, sealed, and delivered the Monsanto Protection Act to the American people which allows the horrid company [rights above and beyond the federal government](#).

Still not convinced?

Tom Vilsack, the pro-biotech former governor of Iowa, is now head of the USDA. Michael Taylor, the former Monsanto Vice President, is now the FDA Deputy Commissioner for Foods, and Roger Beachy, the former director of the Monsanto-funded Danforth Plant Science Center, is the director of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and that's [not even the end of it](#).

Until these obviously compromised institutions are cleaned out, these appeals are likely to get us no where.

The letter goes on to state:

"It is imperative that the American people can trust that their government and its employees are serving their constituents and not the profits of private companies . . . All of the research that the USDA conducts must maintain scientific integrity and transparency to ensure it is guiding sound policy decisions."

We are well past any transparency. One Monsanto employee has even accidentally admitted that the company has an entire department [meant to discredit any science](#) that speaks against its suicide seeds and cancer-causing chemicals.

What the Letter Addresses, Specifically

In this case, authors of the letter are [addressing neonicotinoids](#), specifically. This nicotine-like class of insecticides has been shown to damage the neurological systems of insects and has caused pollinator die-offs that can ultimately harm our food supply tremendously. Monarch butterflies and bees have been hit hardest in what is being [called colony collapse disorder](#) (CCD).

Bees are responsible for pollinating numerous crops around the world, impacting the US by at least \$15 billion a year in food production. Without bees, [much of our food would be lost](#).

In March, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), an environmental activist group supporting local, state, and federal researchers, filed a legal petition with the USDA seeking new rules meant to increase the job protection for government scientists and citing censorship and harassment.

At least 10 USDA scientists have been bullied for research into farm chemical safety that conflicts with the interests of the agribusiness sector, according to PEER executive director Jeff Ruch:

“They have very little in the way of legal rights and have career paths that are extremely vulnerable.”

The scientific work getting hit hardest puts Monsanto at the bulls’ eye – it scrutinizes the effects of neonicotinoids and glyphosate, the main ingredient in Monsanto’s best-selling Roundup herbicide, which the World Health Organization [recently concluded is](#) ‘probably carcinogenic.’

A senior scientist at the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service [told Reuters](#):

“Your words are changed, your papers are censored or edited or you are not allowed to submit them at all.”

[Lori Ann Burd](#), environmental health director at the Center for Biological Diversity echoed this sentiment:

“Censorship and harassment poison good science and good policy. There’s no question that neonicotinoids are killing bees, and it’s long past time for our government to take action. The European Union has already banned neonicotinoids. The reports that USDA is harassing and suppressing its scientists for doing their jobs instead of using their findings to protect our pollinators are extremely disturbing.”

Tiffany Finck-Haynes, food futures campaigner with Friends of the Earth stands for the American people:

“How can the American public expect USDA to develop a federal strategy that will protect bees instead of pesticide industry profits if it is harassing and suppressing its own scientists for conducting research that runs counter to industry claims?

“If USDA wants to employ a kill-the-messenger approach, it will only delay critical action to address the bee crisis that threatens our nation’s food supply.”

Additional Sources:

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