



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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## Press statement

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### **Ban Neonicotinoid to Protect Bees: We Simply Cannot Survive Without Bees**

In conjunction with World Earth Day 2019 on 22.4.2019 (Monday), the Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) calls for protection of bees by banning the use of neonicotinoids which is a notorious pesticide that poses danger to bees.

The theme of this year's Earth Day is "Protect Our Species". The rapid extinction of species in our world today is the result of human activity. Widespread use of pesticides, neonicotinoids, loss of biodiversity, pests, monoculture poses threat to bees around the world.

Neonicotinoids, the most widely used insecticides in the world are a class of neuro-active insecticides chemically similar to nicotine. These insecticides were found in 70 percent of dead bees tested by Health Canada in 2013. This eventually led to restrictions and bans on the different neonicotinoids in European union.

Neonicotinoids insecticides, which includes imidacloprid, acetamiprid, thiacloprid, dinotefuran, nitenpyram, thiamethoxam, and clothianidin. **Thiomenthaxym** is used to deter insect feeding from aphids, thrips, beetles, stem borers and termites. **Imidacloprid** one of the most toxic insecticides to honey bees used to control beetles, fleas, aphids, stink bugs, termites and cockroaches. **Acetamapride** popularly used to control sucking pest.

There is this new phenomenon known as **Colony Collapse Disorder**, in which bees become confused and cannot return to their hive. There are a number of factors leading to colony collapse disorder, but one major reason is the extensive use of harmful pesticides. Commonly used pesticides, attack the nervous system of bees that come in contact with them, making it difficult, if not possible for the bees to find their way back home.

Bees are an integral part of natural farming. They help in pollination. Honey bees travel from flower to flower, collecting nectar and pollen grains. The bee collects the pollen by rubbing against the anthers. The pollen collects on the hind legs. As the bee flies from flower to flower, some of the pollen grains are transferred onto the stigma of other flowers. Thus, their role in cross pollination is of great importance.

Bees travel 24km per hour and they could make more than 900 trips from flower to nest and uncountable times from flower to flower. Hopping from one flower to another helps in cross pollination and thus increases yield up to 20 to 30 percent. Pollination enhances the growth of the plant and ensures the plants are disease resistant. Besides that, farmers are able to collect pure honey. This honey has many health building properties. Since ancient times it has been used as natural remedy for many diseases.

Bees are also important species for survival of other species. Many animals depend on bees for their survival because their food sources including nuts, berries, seeds and fruits rely on insect pollination. Pollination is important for the growth of food. Disappearance of pollinators will have great impact on the health and viability of crops and native plants. Pollinators contributed billions to the world economy too.

Bees are pollinators vital to our food chain and play a role in increasing yield and enriching biodiversity. Understanding bees' role in agriculture, the environment and our lives, CAP is now advancing our natural farming programme by integrating bee keeping.

Farmers have forgotten and neglected the role of bees in increasing their yield. It is high time that they get rid of pesticides and weed-killers.

Besides that, human being's lack of knowledge on bees is another reason for their extinction. Upon seeing a bee nest, they set fire and destroy the whole nest for fear of being stung. Honey bees and stingless bees are considered safe when we learn proper method of keeping them.

Realising the danger of pesticides to human health and the environment, CAP has been educating farmers and the general public on the dangers of pesticides, besides recommending and demonstrating safe and productive natural farming practices. Integrated farming is one way of getting rid of pests and weeds. This ensures the elimination of dangerous pests and increase in predator insects.

CAP urges the government to ban neonicotinoid pesticides for the survival of our food pollinators. CAP is also encouraging consumers to design their garden as bee-friendly garden. Those interested can contact CAP for guidance and advice

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