

Leaked document shows EPA allowed bee-toxic pesticide despite own scientists' red flags

It's not just the State and Defense departments that are reeling this month from leaked documents. The Environmental Protection Agency now has some explaining to do, too. In place of dodgy dealings with foreign leaders, this case involves the German agrichemical giant Bayer; a pesticide with an unpronounceable name, clothianidin; and an insect species crucial to food production (as well as a food producer itself), the honeybee. And in lieu of a memo leaked to a globetrotting Australian, this one features a document delivered to a long-time Colorado beekeeper.

Clothianidin has been widely used on corn, the largest U.S. crop, since 2003. Suppliers sell seeds pre-treated with it. Like other members of the neonicotinoid family of pesticides, clothianidin gets "taken up by a plant's vascular system and expressed through pollen and nectar," according to Pesticide Action Network of North America (PANNA), which leaked the document along with Beyond Pesticides.

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