

Updated April 22, 2014  



Thanks to the progressive establishment of new maize crops, the reports of serious bee depopulation and die-offs are increasing in the Po River valley.

Initial reports from **Piedmont** (near Saluzzo and Savigliano) were followed by those from a dozens of apiaries in the **Friuli** plain, with continuing effects being felt by professional beekeepers in the provinces of **Milan, Varese , Pavia , Mantua, and Piacenza** , all strictly correlated with the planting of corn.

Within a few days, exactly at the same time as the corn farmer started to sow, whole apiaries were decimated!

UNAAPI calls on beekeepers to be attentive to and immediately report any suspected depopulation.

We remind beekeepers that observation from the outside the hive are not enough: sometimes , in fact, we can't see dead bees in front of the doorways, but just hives without foragers.

It's necessary to **report immediately any cases of hive depopulation to the ASL (Italian national health service), to the "**

[Beenet](#)

"

network and to follow through until sampling of dead or dying bees has occurred.

The analysis of dead bees samples can find traces of the most likely killer molecule only if the bees are **taken early in the morning, before the first flight, at the bottom of the hives**, and then immediately frozen. Thiacloprid, for example, rapidly degrades.

These are dramatic poisonings, but not everywhere. Bee poisonings seem to depend on how dusty the seeding area is, and the character of the sowing surface. We find totally depopulated apiaries, to the point where sampling is impossible because there are no more bees, to cases where piles of dead or dying bees are found at hive entrances.

In addition to Mesuro 200 SC, apparently added in the field to chlorpyrifos, two new seed treatments have been authorized. Sonido, based on a neonicotinoid Thiacloprid that was "forgotten" by the EU and then irresponsibly authorized by Health Ministry in December 2013 (coincidental timing?). The "innovative" Force 20 CS, based on the pyrethroid Tefluthrin, is highly toxic to bees.

An initial investigation indicates that a very limited amount of seed coated with Sonido, the preparation of Bayer's neonicotinoid-based thiacloprid, has been sold.

Recall that Coldiretti decided to announce to farmers the Italian authorization of the preparation Sonido Bayer: "[Pesticides, authorized a new product for corn that does not harm the bees](#)" (ITA).

UNAAPI, however, following the Italian Ministry of Health decision to authorize the preparation Sonido, in December, 2013, noted that :

- "the EU's decision to suspend use, temporarily and partially, covers only three neonicotinoids molecules and Fipronil, and not the other molecules of the same family."
- The Italian Commission did not consider it prudent, in the face of the scientific evidence of other systemically active molecules to require specific findings on the preparation of thiacloprid and therefore authorized without certainty regarding acceptable effects on bees and pollinators.

Therefore, UNAAPI, in collaboration with PAN Europe, initiated the procedure to access documents to verify the probable, if not certain, lack of verification that this preparation is compatible with bees and pollinators. This request for documents is a prerequisite to requesting the withdrawal of the authorization of this pesticide.

