

# Protecting Bee Pollinators on the Farm

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Bees are vitally important to the sustainability of agriculture. The estimated value of their contribution to Canadian agriculture alone is as much as \$2 billion.

Farmers are well known to be excellent stewards of the land. Following Best Management Practices will help maximize the benefits of seed treatments while also protecting bees around farm operations.

As always, when handling any crop protection product, it is important to start by **reading and following all label directions**.

## Best Management Practices Primer

Best Management Practices\* (BMPs) are approaches based on known science that, when followed, support healthy crops, healthy bees and a healthy environment.

See reverse for details.

\*BMPs developed in conjunction with CropLife Canada and its member companies.



# Best Management Practices Primer

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## Prior to Planting

- Communication is key
  - Learn about any bees that may forage on your land. Know how to contact neighbouring beekeepers.
  - Talk to neighbouring beekeepers about protecting bees during planting – discuss alternative locations for hives or ways to shield the bees during planting.
- Store and handle treated seed appropriately
  - Store treated seed under appropriate conditions, protected from the elements and pests.
  - Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment when handling treated seed.
  - Do not reuse empty seed bags for any purpose other than storing the original treated seed.
- Check your machinery and seed
  - Always clean and maintain planting equipment.
  - Always use high-quality seed that is free of excessive dust.
  - Do not load or clean planting equipment near bee colonies and avoid places where bees may be foraging, such as flowering crops or weeds.
  - Check that the planter is set up correctly and calibrated for correct depth and seed placement.
  - When turning on the planter, avoid engaging the system where emitted dust may come in contact with honey bee colonies.
  - Manage dandelions and other flowering weeds in the field prior to planting to reduce exposure of bees to seed dust.
  - Depending on the type of planter, deflectors may be an option to reduce the off-field movement of seed dust generated during planting. Speak with your equipment dealer or manufacturer regarding the availability of deflector kits for your planter.

## During Planting

- Avoid transfer of dust from the seed bag into the planter.
- Manage lubricants
  - Lubricants ease seed singulation, improve drop, and reduce wear and tear on equipment and seed. A dust-reducing agent is the only seed lubricant permitted for use when planting corn and soybean seed. Carefully follow use directions for this seed flow lubricant.
  - One hundred percent graphite may continue to be used as a mechanical lubricant in finger pickup or mechanical type planter meters only. Graphite must not be used in pneumatic (vacuum meter) planters when the corn or soybean seed has been treated with an insecticide.
  - Plant at the recommended seeding rate.
- Check headlands, rough areas, and the main body of the field for exposed seed. Spilled or exposed seeds and dust must be incorporated into the soil or cleaned-up from the soil surface.
- Be aware of wind direction when planting near a source of pollen or nectar for bees (i.e. nearby flowering crops or weeds).

## After Planting

- Vacuum treated seed from the seed box and return it to the bag from which it came.
- Collect empty seed bags and seed box lubricant containers and dispose of them in an appropriate manner.
- Do not leave empty bags or left-over treated seed in fields.

For more information about these Best Management Practices and bee health, visit [www.beehealth.ca](http://www.beehealth.ca).