## <u>Turf and Ornamental Professionals</u> <u>Depend on Neonics</u>



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MADISON, Wis. — In an extensive study of the diverse turf and ornamental industry, researchers found that neonicotinoids are the primary tools used by professionals to control destructive insect pests. A survey of pest management practices in greenhouses, nurseries, lawns, landscapes and trees reveals that neonicotinoids are the top-rated products to control the most important pests in each of these market segments. Turf and ornamental professionals fear the loss of these products would reduce the quality of their plants and services, increase costs and negatively impact their ability to manage pest resistance.

University economists conducted a detailed survey of 750 turf and ornamental professionals to assess their pest management practices in greenhouses, nurseries, lawns, landscapes and trees. When asked to rate the relative importance of different variables in choosing an insecticide, more than 90 percent of all respondents listed performance (protecting plant quality and consistency of pest control) and safety (to applicators and customers) as their leading considerations. Nearly 60 percent of all professionals surveyed included a neonicotinoid as one of their most used" insecticides. Neonicotinoids were the top-ranked insecticide used in each market segment.

When asked what would happen if neonicotinoids were no longer available, nearly 75 percent of all professionals indicated there were either no acceptable alternatives, or not enough acceptable alternatives to meet their pest management needs. Across all turf and ornamental markets, 55 percent of professionals noted that the loss of neonicotinoids would result in reduced income for their business. The highest financial impact was in the lawn segment, where 68 percent anticipated a loss of income.

The major reasons cited for income reductions among all professionals were related to increased costs associated with using alternative insecticides and

the impact on plant quality or services provided. Without neonicotinoids, 78 percent of respondents expected higher costs due to more frequent treatments, or increased volumes of alternative insecticides. Two-thirds of all professionals indicated that higher costs would occur as a result of increased time associated with additional treatments, record keeping and worker training. Perhaps even more important to their long-term business viability, almost half of all professionals noted there would be a decrease in customer satisfaction if neonicotinoids were not available.

Without neonicotinoids, most professionals indicated they would shift primarily to older chemistries, and many expressed concerns about managing invasive pests or how this would affect their Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices. From their perspective, switching to older products would represent a serious setback in managing pest resistance and to their overall operations.

Neonicotinoids have significant value in the turf and ornamental industry primarily because they meet a broad range of customer expectations. Most professionals fear that losing neonicotinoids would increase their operational costs, reduce the quality of their plants and services, reduce customer satisfaction and negatively impact their ability to manage pest resistance.

## **Report Reference**

## The Value of Neonicotinoid Insecticides in Turf and Ornamentals: The Value of Neonicotinoids to Turf and Ornamental Professionals

This report is one in a series that will be released over the next few months as part of a comprehensive evaluation of the economic and societal benefits of neonicotinoid insecticides in North America. The research was conducted by AgInfomatics, a consulting firm of independent agricultural economists and scientists, and jointly commissioned and sponsored by Bayer CropScience, Mitsui Chemicals Agro, Inc., Syngenta and Valent U.S.A. Corporation.

All reports will be published online at <u>www.GrowingMatters.org</u>.