

## Les Eccles, Ontario Beekeeper's Association

So I'm Les Eccles. I'm with the Ontario Beekeepers Association. I thought I better get up and say why a beekeeper is at an alfalfa kind of forum here. There was supposed to be a producer who was coming with me but he's from New Liskeard so he couldn't quite make it down this far. But the concern that was spoke at our Board meeting recently with Roundup Ready alfalfa. You know I mentioned earlier that as far as pollen goes, it's not a pollen source at all for honey bees but it's a huge nectar source and right now the big issue for our industry is our export market to Europe especially Germany. Germany is a huge exporter of honey and they've put big restrictions on anything that contains GMO pollen.

Western Canada, by far, they produce most of our honey and that's a big impact on them because of canola and canola is a huge pollen source for honey bees and that's really restricted their market.

Kind of the difference when you're talking about – and I'm going to get this term wrong – this LLP is that when you are talking about canola, you have canola and you have a restriction there and when you talk about soybeans, you have soybeans and you have a restriction there. With honey bees it's kind of compounding, right you might have canola but as soon as you add another crop you have that one on top of it, so at what level do you stop? Every time you add another crop, the level's going to keep going up.

Right now with alfalfa like I said, when you send export honey like that there's a lot of restrictions, a lot of monitoring that goes on and one thing they look for is pollen content in honey and with alfalfa often they find no pollen and they actually come back saying this isn't honey. You know honey actually has a certain amount of pollen to be considered honey.

For us, at this point they're not looking at nectar content, they're only looking at pollen, so until they look at nectar, or they might just look at Canada and say: "Well now you have canola and now you have alfalfa", they might just say: "OK that's it".

So that's the risk that our industry is looking at, is our export markets which is huge and it's growing. Like we're going into Japan now and a lot of other markets that are new and huge markets for us.

The other thing I thought I'd mention, kinda trying to compare this situation to one we're in right now with honey bees, where this spring some of you might have heard in the news that we lost quite a few bees to seed treated corn which has been as confirmed as possible through the PMRA. This is a situation where a lot of testing had been done through good lab practices through our lab at the University and they did great work. You know there's only so much you can do through lab testing and everything and register it through the PMRA and go through the whole process and then once it hits the field you find out it's a completely different situation.

And that's one where at least through the PMRA if there's a incident you can report to the PMRA, there's an investigation, it's registered and there's a form – a process - that you go through to investigate that. In this case there's no real route. Like once this happens, no matter how far along down the road it is, as far as I know there's no repercussion, there's nothing to say OK we made a mistake. It's just well we made a mistake and that's it, we just go ahead.

There's no compensation like for the beekeepers we get no compensation through that because with the corn seed, everybody went through the label. Nobody did anything wrong. There's no repercussions in that case.

So it's complicated but I think that's a good comparison. There's no regulations on genetically modified crops and how contamination could cause an issue and what the future would hold, like there is with pesticides – like there's a real regulatory agency that looks into that.

That's all I have to say.