

The war to keep bee killing pesticides banned

As part of their reliance on a year round food supply, since they do not hibernate, hares need an abundance of herbs during the summer months and these need pollinating insects such as bees and butterflies to set seed. The grasses which provide food predominantly for hares during the winter are wind pollinated.

There is abundant scientific evidence that neonicotinamide pesticides are responsible for dramatic declines in pollinating insects. This resulted in EU restrictions on their use in 2013 but these were lifted in 2015 in some parts of the UK, mainly rapeseed crops in Suffolk, to protect them from alleged damage caused by flea beetle. This move by the British government under the influence of corporations such as Bayer and Syngenta to allow the use of banned pesticides linked to bee deaths has caused widespread anger and resulted a court challenge by Friends of the Earth.

In the USA an award-winning bee scientist, Jonathan Lundgren, has been suspended by the government in retaliation for his research linking bee die-offs to bee-killing pesticides. But he is refusing to back down and has filed a whistleblower complaint which a judge has ruled can go forward. This means he has a real chance of getting justice and showing how corporations are exerting undue influence over government research.

Grazers – a humane method of pest control.

Millions of pounds are lost each year by farmers because of rabbit and pigeon damage to crops. Hares can also cause damage in some areas where they are abundant, such as parts of East Anglia although, given the choice, they prefer to forage on wild herbs and grasses. Control measures such as shooting and snaring cause immense suffering but a product called Grazers offers a humane alternative.

Grazers is not a pesticide, but a trace element spray which when applied to the crop deters birds and mammals from causing damage. It does not harm the environment, wildlife, or any pet animals coming into contact with it and is available in small packs for gardens. Grazers has a wide range of uses including winter and spring wheat, barley, oil seed rape, vegetables, salad, top fruit, soft fruit, ornamental horticultural, and grass. Since it is based on trace elements users have also found that Grazers improves plant growth.

Grazers was discovered, and is still manufactured and supplied by Grazers Ltd., in the north of England. Contact information: GRAZERS LTD Gill bank, Ousby, Penrith, Cumbria. CA10 1QA "mailto:info@grazers.co.uk

Scandal of unregulated hare shooting.

As pheasant shooting closes on 31 January hare shoots will begin in earnest, especially in eastern counties, although there are also large shoots in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. Research in 1974 showed that by February 65% of a sample of hares from Norfolk were pregnant and by the end of the month about half the females had given birth to their first litter and were lactating. In Scotland the brown hare now has a shooting close season from February to September inclusive and the mountain hare from March to July inclusive which undoubtedly reduces the previous toll of around 390,000 hares shot annually in Britain and an estimated 37,000 orphaned leverets dying of starvation. But the 1995 Biodiversity Action Plan having among its objectives a doubling of hare numbers in Britain by 2010 will not be achieved while shooting in England and Wales remains unregulated. This scandalous situation is exploited by wealthy French, Germans and Italians who come over here to shoot our hares for fun.

From the archives - Early Day Motion tabled by George Howarth MP 08.01.08

That this House deplores the reported widespread breaches of the Hunting Act 2004, calls for a review of the legislation with the aim of, if necessary, strengthening prohibition and urges the Government to ensure that the law is enforced. (*Eight years on and we are still waiting Ed.*)