



Pollinator Stewardship Council

P.O. Box 304, Perkinston, MS 39573

www.pollinatorstewardship.org

832-727-9492

Oct. 29, 2015

Contact: Michele Colopy, Program Director
progdirector@pollinatorstewardship.org

Independence of Scientists to Conduct Science is Integral to Quality Science

The Pollinator Stewardship Council is deeply concerned about the political influence and pressure placed upon scientists, especially U.S. Dept. of Agriculture scientists. Dr. Lundgren's experiences, and reports of other scientists who have faced consequences or investigations, when their work called into question the health and safety of agricultural chemicals is troubling. Dr. Lundgren, and other scientists have documented clear actions that violated their scientific integrity, including:

- USDA officials retracting studies
- watering down findings
- removing scientists' names from authorship
- delaying approvals for publication of research papers.

The Whistleblower Retaliation Narrative (<http://www.peer.org/news/news-releases/usda-scientist-punished-for-pollinator-research.html>) published by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) Oct. 28, 2015, and their previous [petition](http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/usda/3_26_15_USDA_%20Rule-Making_Petition.pdf) (http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/usda/3_26_15_USDA_%20Rule-Making_Petition.pdf) raises grave concerns for the integrity of the nation's agricultural science. The petition urged the agency to adopt policies to specifically prevent the "political suppression or alteration of studies and lay out clear procedures for investigating allegations and of scientific misconduct."¹ PEER found more than ten USDA scientists who have faced consequences or investigations, when their work called into question the health and safety of agricultural chemicals. The latest Narrative concerning Dr. Lundgren brings these concerns to light again. This, time, a well-known, and well-respected scientist is making his concerns public.

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The Pollinator Stewardship Council's mission is to defend managed and native pollinators vital to a sustainable and affordable food supply from the adverse impact of pesticides.

As beekeepers, we have had many opportunities to work with Dr. Jonathan Lundgren. Beekeepers have even provided our honey bee colonies for his research to better understand and improve the health of honey bees in the U.S. We have found his research to be insightful, unbiased, and supportive of solutions to the concerns of honey bee health.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a responsibility to protect the health and safety of the American public, and ensure long-term viability and sustainability of the environment and our natural resources. Dr. Lundgren's research could result in the improvement of our waters which could indirectly financially benefit the Agricultural Community overall by requiring less regulation.

All of the research the USDA conducts must maintain scientific integrity and transparency to ensure it is guiding science-based policy decisions.

The Pollinator Stewardship Council is concerned about the experience of Dr. Lundgren as a USDA scientist. We are concerned about any U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist being harassed and their work censored or suppressed, especially work related to pesticides. We again urge the USDA Inspector General's office to conduct a thorough investigation into this and similar matters. The USDA must maintain scientific integrity by not interfering with the valuable work of its scientists.

Scientific evidence has implicated insecticides as a leading driver of bee declines, and herbicides as a leading driver of the destruction of pollinator habitat. Beekeepers, honey producers, and the crops pollinated by managed and native pollinators rely on USDA scientists to protect the health of our food supply. Honey bees and native bees pollinate one third of the human diet. For a sustainable and affordable food supply pollinators are key to crop yields, affordable food, and diverse nutritious food.

The USDA must maintain scientific integrity, and not allow harassment, censorship or suppression of science-based findings. The Pollinator Stewardship Council will continue to support scientists who are working to provide quality, unbiased science which will benefit honey bees and native pollinators, and the health and safety of all agricultural stakeholders.

¹ Ruch, Jeff. Petition for Rulemaking United States Department of Agriculture. 26 March 2015. http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/usda/3_26_15_USDA_%20Rule-Making_Petition.pdf