

Letters/Opinions

New Rocky Mountains section in July

WESTERN *Farmer-Stockman* will launch a new section in our next issue focusing on news from the inland West. We're calling it *Rocky Mountains Vista*, which highlights some of our coverage from Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho and Utah.

This latest effort to provide readers with a glimpse of information from their region will bring you livestock stories and other news, along with lighter feature articles, profiling this important area of our readership.

Other news from the above states will also continue to appear in our Newswatch, Crops and Livestock sections, as well. Equally, we will provide



continued coverage of our other states — Oregon, Washington and Nevada — under these titles as well.

We hope you will enjoy our latest product as a part of our ongoing commitment to helping you find all of the agricultural news you need, presented in

the most reader-friendly manner.

As a reminder, don't forget to check out our www.WesternFarmerStockman.com Web site when you can. We've been highlighting the improvements to this Internet connection for some time in special features that have appeared on these pages.

Included on the site is our magazine, as well as an archive search, which enables you to find past articles you may want to retrieve.

But the Web site offers far more, such as an opportunity to fine-tune it to your specific farming needs, and a load of general information on weather, advertising and markets, to name only a few.

Special news and feature items are also written specifically for the Web site, and there are exclusives that offer enhancement of articles appearing in *Western Farmer-Stockman* each month.

Plus, you can see all of the other magazines produced throughout the nation by our parent company, Farm Progress.

All of which we hope sends to you the clear signal that we are working hard every day to present the farming news you need via vehicles that make your ride on the information highway a Rolls Royce experience.

Recognizing that you are inundated by reams and megabytes of information every day, *Western Farmer-Stockman*

presents you with terse news reports in fewer words, adding contact information for you to use the Internet or phone to find out more about each story.

Also, our Key Points boxes found with individual articles are designed to give you a synopsis of the information presented in a quick-read fashion.

As we continue to strive to modify our product to these easy-read specifications, we'd like to hear from you on how we can make *Western Farmer-Stockman* an even better fit for your needs.

Please feel free to contact me at the e-mail or phone listed in our Newswatch section.

Going to the dogs

Western Farmer-Stockman would like to feature your favorite pickup-riding dog in a photo section.

If you think enough of your faithful farm pooch to see his or her furry face in our magazine, take a picture of your dog in the back of the truck and send it in. We'll sort through the best shots and present a special photo page in a future issue.

Please send high-resolution photos to me at tburnham@farmprogress.com, or glossy prints by mail at my address posted in the Newswatch section.

We'll need doggie names and breeds, and you can add any tales of delightful dog experiences as well, if you like.

Bees face toxic challenge with suspect insecticide

IT is generally accepted that toxic bank loans caused our financial system to collapse. Now it appears that toxic substances are causing collapse of a whole host of pollinators that keep natural systems functioning efficiently. And the collapses of both the financial and biological systems are part of a larger system failure.

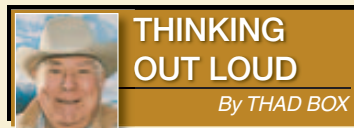
Beginning in the 1990s, beekeepers began to suspect the systemic insecticide imidacloprid for death of bees. This is a product that is taken up by plants and becomes systemic, that is it is stored in and moves through the plant system. Once the chemical is in the nectar and pollen of the plant, nothing can protect pollinators who gather the poisoned food.

Imidacloprid a suspect

When imidacloprid was introduced in Europe, French beekeepers claimed it produced "mad bee disease." France banned its use on major crops such as sunflowers and corn. Studies were made; results are inconclusive. Beekeepers claim it kills their bees. The chemical companies say it is safe. In America the EPA allowed use of the insecticide, primarily on data supplied by the manufacturer.

There are no scientific studies that show conclusively that systemic insecticides cause bee colony collapse. But studies show imidacloprid is highly toxic to earthworms, birds, bees, some fish and other non-target species.

The National Honey Bee Advisory Board, representing both the American Beekeepers Federation and the American Honey Producers, presented case studies from North Dakota, Minnesota, Texas, Florida and California that circumstantially link imidacloprid to bee Colony Collapse



THINKING OUT LOUD

By THAD BOX

Disorder. They want the pesticide banned in the United States.

Base rules on objective studies

Imidacloprid is available for insect control on roses, lawn, vegetables, fruit trees, ornamentals and crops. It is available on the Internet for treating termites, fleas on pets, household pests — almost anything you can imagine.

Organizations take extreme positions ranging from it screws up everything (Sierra Club of Canada) to that it is safe and the savior of the farmer (Bayer's "expert overview"). The scary point is that we do not have good studies to show the chemical's effect on the broad pollination system.

Beekeepers with NHBAB ask, "How did we find ourselves at a point where an extremely dangerous chemical compound has come into such widespread use, threatening the very existence and viability of the pollination framework of the country?"

The answer is simple: deregulation. The same concept that precipitated our financial collapse has precipitated an environmental collapse no less serious. At the same time that financial institutions were being given a free reign to regulate themselves on the naive assumption that industry knew best, pesticide regulation was being turned over from EPA to industry on the same assumption.

For the past eight years our government has been of industry, by industry and for industry. It put foxes in charge of every henhouse. It tolerated toxic loans, unsafe drugs, melamine-adulterated food, polluted air, contaminated water, kid-killer toys — the list goes on. It is time to go back to making rules based on objective studies done by independent scientists. We must re-establish government of the people, by the people, for the people.




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Box lives in Logan, Utah. He writes about land and people of the West. He can be reached at thadbox@comcast.net or 435-787-8706.