



Eric Smith
Chatham Biotec
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Re: Support for Avipel Registration in Canada

February 12, 2021

Dear Mr. Smith,

Agriculture in Northern Ontario is a critical component of the economy, supporting over 12,000 jobs and contributing over \$580 million to the provincial GDP. The industry has also seen year over year growth, especially in the grains and oilseeds sector, with farm cash receipts increasing by 300% from 2006 to 2017. However, sandhill cranes continue to be a threat to the crop sector, impacting plant counts, yields & farm cash receipts.

The OFA completed a study assessing the impact of wildlife damage to crops – it found that the total economic damage attributed to wildlife was over \$265 million in 2018 and that in Northern Ontario, sandhill cranes caused the most damage. Of all conflicts with cranes, the most frequent and economically significant damage come from cranes eating planted seeds. In spring, damage can be intense, as cranes select fields that are germinating. Cranes will continue to forage in these fields, however, even after the plants are no longer susceptible to damage. A flock of 100 cranes foraging in a planted cornfield for 3 days can eat about 240,000 kernels or 100% of about 8 acres. Damage, however, typically is spread out over the entire field and includes about 20 to 30% of the planted seeds. Cranes can decimate entire fields in some areas or remain foraging on farms for weeks and this issue exists for many crops outside of corn, including grains & potatoes.

Farmers in Ontario currently have little recourse to deal with sandhill cranes – there is currently a sandhill crane hunting season in Western Canada, but the population impacting Ontario is much smaller and a hunt is said to be unsustainable. Farmers can obtain a Damage or Danger permit, but this can be a burdensome process that does not meet farmer needs or address the underlying issue. Research is currently underway to assess migration and movement patterns, which could help with mitigation and management decisions. However, these decisions are a long time off and farmers need help now.

The Northern Caucus of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture is submitting this letter in support of Avipel, a bird repellent made by Chatham Biotec, receiving registration for use in Canada. This repellent stops sandhill cranes from eating the newly planted seed but is non-lethal. This, combined with the tremendous efficacy makes it a highly desirable option compared to shooting, scaring, lure crops, etc. Avipel is currently registered and available for use in many states, including those that border the Great Lakes, and this product could be a critical tool for use by farmers in Ontario.

Northern Caucus



Sincerely,

Mark Kunkel

Mark Kunkel
Zone 15 Provincial Director
Ontario Federation of Agriculture

The Northern Caucus of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture represents the ten local federations across Northern Ontario. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is the largest general farm organization in Canada and represents the needs and interests of farmers across the province.