



# TREATED SEED: MYTHS — VS. — FACTS

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## **MYTH: Treated seeds aren't necessary.**

**FACT:** Without seed treatments, farmers would need to revert to more intensive and costly ag practices to achieve the same results — requiring more tillage, fewer cover crops and more foliar sprays. **Treated seeds** enable farmers to maximize yields with remarkably small and measured amounts of pesticides applied precisely where they are needed the most.

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## **MYTH: Treated seeds aren't regulated.**

**FACT:** Crop protection components of treated seeds are highly regulated – twice. First, the pesticide must be studied and reviewed for use as a seed treatment by the U.S. EPA, then the seeds are regulated by state and federal seed control agencies. All pesticide products used as seed treatments continue to be reviewed by regulatory agencies for as long as they are sold. Along with both U.S. and state agency reviews, all treated seed packaging includes a use label, and the seed industry actively promotes proper use and **stewardship**.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Replacing seed treatments in commodity crops would cost U.S. farmers nearly **\$850 MILLION**
- ▶ Growers would need nearly five pounds of older chemicals to replace one pound of neonicotinoid insecticide, resulting in an increase in application rate per acre of **375%**
- ▶ U.S. cropped land would need to increase more than **340,000 ACRES** to offset losses in yield and quality from not using seed treatments
- ▶ Economists estimate that a loss of seed treatments would cost North American consumers in excess of **\$4 BILLION** annually in higher food prices

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**MYTH: Treated seeds aren't safe.**

**FACT:** To receive approval, all pesticide products used as seed treatments must be proven safe to the environment, consumers, applicators and farmers. The highly targeted nature of seed treatments helps further minimize potential risks to the environment. Regulations mandate that anyone who treats or handles treated seeds manage them properly and according to label instructions to minimize risk of pesticide exposure to humans and the environment. Learn more about pesticide safety here: [Safety Data Behind Pesticides](#).

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**MYTH: Treated seeds are a threat to bees.**

**FACT:** While there have been fluctuations in honeybee colony numbers over the past decades and higher annual losses of honeybee colonies in some regions more recently, U.S. beekeepers list Varroa mites and the diseases they spread as the main reason for honeybee colony losses. The reality is that honeybee colonies are actually on the rise. In fact, in January 2021, the [USDA reported](#) that colonies were up 2% from the past year and that colonies lost with colony collapse disorder symptoms were down by 27%. Recent reports from the states of [Washington](#) and [Vermont](#) confirm the safety of seed treatments to pollinators. To support ongoing efforts to ensure pollinator safety, the industry publishes guidelines including the [Protect Pollinators Checklist](#).

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**MYTH: Farmers don't have a choice when it comes to using treated seeds.**

**FACT:** Each farm and farmer is unique, and farmers always have a choice when it comes to what's best for their land and their businesses. The majority of farmers choose to use treated seed because of the tremendous value it provides — not only in boosting yield and reducing pesticide applications, but also in supporting sustainable agriculture practices on farm. Additionally, many organic farmers can choose to use biological-based seed treatments.

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**MYTH: Treated seeds are "exempt" from regulation.**

**FACT:** You may have heard of the so-called "treated article exemption." The reality is, treated seeds are anything but "exempt" from regulation. In fact, they're regulated twice – by both EPA and by state and federal seed control agencies. Additionally, all pesticides are subject to periodic review to ensure that, as the science advances and/or policies and pesticide use practices change over time, all registered products continue to meet the statutory standard. [Find out more](#).

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**MYTH: Treated seeds don't have guidelines for handling.**

**FACT:** Industry and growers take treated seed stewardship extremely seriously. This includes a commitment to following proper steps for handling seed throughout its entire life cycle to reduce its environmental impact and to ensure it does not enter the grain supply. ASTA and CropLife America, along with seed companies, seed treatment providers and universities and other stakeholder groups, have developed a robust set of recommendations—and conduct regular education and outreach—to assist farmers and others involved with best practices and processes for on-farm of treating, handling, transporting and planting of treated seeds. Learn more at: [seed-treatment-guide.com](#).

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Learn more at  
[betterseed.org/treated-seeds](https://betterseed.org/treated-seeds).