UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

UF/IFAS Extension Hendry County

Author: Gene McAvoy, Extension Agent IV Emeritus

Pollinator Protection

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When faced with a pest problem, growers and pesticide applicators have a number of pest management options including cultural, chemical, biological, or physical methods. There are many situations where pest control is necessary and chemical controls must be used. Certain chemistries are known to have negative and long-term impacts on bees, other pollinators, and beneficial arthropods. Others have minimal impacts.

Pollinators are essential to the survival of the majority of flowering plants in our environment and to the production of more than 85 crops. Over \$15 billion annually is attributed to the value of pollination of food crops, especially fruits, vegetables, and nuts. It is estimated that pollinators are responsible for 1 out of every 3 bites of food that we eat.

The areas treated for pests are often visited by pollinators; mainly insects such as bees, butterflies, wasps and flies, and also birds and bats. Pollinators visit flowers in their search for nectar and pollen.

Insects are the most common and abundant pollinators. Among the pollinating insects, the honey bee is relied on to perform most of the commercial pollination.

The EPA pollinator-protection language that is required to be on pesticide labels will outline how best to minimize these impacts.

Goals

- Understand how to legally, responsibly and effectively use of pesticides to protect bee health.
- Identify steps that you can take to reduce pesticide risks to pollinators without overly burdening pesticide users or beekeepers.
- Be able interpret legally enforceable label language including EPA mandated pollinator advisory hazard statements (pollinator protection language) on pesticide labels.
- Apply pollinator protection Best Management Practices when applying pesticides.
- Recognizing mortality due to pesticide exposure

As a pesticide applicator, you are critical to reducing pesticide risks to honey bees and other pollinators. Proper pesticide use starts with following the product label. Also, the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) wherever pollinators are present will prevent harming honey bees, their food sources, water and habitat.

The bottom line is that the label is the law—it must be followed.