

Introduction to the North Carolina Pollinator Protection Strategy

In June 2014, President Obama issued a memorandum establishing a Pollinator Health Task Force, co-chaired by USDA and EPA, to create a National Pollinator Health Strategy that promotes the health of honey bees and other pollinators¹. In the National Strategy document written in response to the President's directive, EPA encouraged states to develop their own strategies for increasing communication among stakeholders to mitigate pesticide exposures of bees to pesticides. Communication and coordination between pesticide applicators and beekeepers prior to pesticide applications can both protect pollinators and promote the production of our nation's food and fiber.

The EPA intends to monitor the success of states' efforts in mitigating risks to bees from pesticides on an ongoing basis and use this information when deciding whether or not further pesticide label restrictions are necessary. In order to determine measures of success, a Pollinator Protection Workgroup was formed in 2016 as part of the Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee (PPDC) which advises the EPA. This workgroup is charged with developing: 1) recommendations for how to evaluate/measure the effectiveness of state- and tribal-recognized pollinator protection efforts at the national level; and, 2) a strategy to communicate that effectiveness to the public. The workgroup's goal is to make final recommendations to the full PPDC by fall of 2017.

North Carolina has developed this Pollinator Protection Strategy to promote the flexibility for our farmers, beekeepers, and homeowners to pursue a wide array of pollinator protection efforts as diverse as our agricultural and urban communities themselves. Therefore, North Carolina's Pollinator Protection Strategy is intended to be a comprehensive guidance document to promote voluntary efforts to protect pollinators and continue to support our agricultural community. Just as the scope of the strategy is broad, it is also anticipated to be used as a resource for a wide audience, including beekeepers, farmers, landscapers, homeowners, and other pesticide applicators. Therefore, the NC Pollinator Protection Strategy covers a wide range of topics, including information on: honey bee health; pesticide regulatory efforts to protect pollinators at the federal and state level; crop-specific considerations regarding pollinators and pesticides; Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) tools; and resources on creating pollinator gardens and enhancing foraging and nesting habitat. The NC Pollinator Protection Strategy is the culmination of work of many contributors, including individuals and groups from the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, NC State University faculty and cooperative extension, non-profit organizations, and the NC Farm Bureau. Finally, because the science, regulation, policy, and efforts of protecting pollinators and promoting agriculture is changing at a rapid pace, the NC Pollinator Protection Strategy is considered a "living" document, and is therefore published in this online format by design. It will be expanded, updated, and revised as needed. Any suggestions are welcomed.

¹ Presidential Memorandum -- Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators, June 20, 2014. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/20/presidential-memorandum-creating-federal-strategy-promote-health-honey-b>