

Pollinator Protections and Mosquito Control

Issue: The American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA) appreciates the vital role pollinating insects, primarily European Honey Bees, play in the availability of many agricultural products and fully supports science-based efforts to ensure pollinator populations are not adversely affected by pesticide applications designed to protect public health.

Background: In June of 2014 President Obama signed the Presidential Memorandum -- Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators. This Memorandum called for increased collaboration among stakeholders, stipulated that decisions be based on sound science, and outlined essential research goals. It also established a Pollinator Protection Task Force charged with creating a Pollinator Research Action Plan (Plan). The Plan must be informed by research on relevant topics to include exposure to parasites and other pests, disease, poor nutrition, loss of habitat, pesticides, migratory beekeeping, and other factors that contribute to pollinator health.

Discussion: Mosquitoes are among the deadliest creatures on the planet. Honey bees are responsible for some of the food that we eat.

Mosquito control professionals and bee keepers are constantly challenged by new invasive pests and diseases, and both use pesticides and other methods to combat these new evolving threats. The most common pesticides found in bee hives are those applied by bee keepers to control the parasitic mite *Varroa*. *Varroa* transmits disease to their hosts just like mosquitoes do to humans and other animals.

It is imperative to both protect the health of the public through mosquito control programs and protect the population of pollinators. Both can be achieved by following the label directions and precautions on the pesticides being utilized, and by employing best management practices designed to protect pollinators.

It is the policy of the AMCA that, to the extent practicable, mosquito control districts coordinate their activities with local beekeepers so as to minimize exposures of hives and individual bees to public health pesticides being used in mosquito control operations. To this end, the AMCA encourages an ongoing dialogue among all stakeholders so that mandated control activities result in minimal impact to pollinators. To support this goal, certain information to help mitigate impacts on pollinators needs to be developed and exchanged including: lists of local beekeepers and contact information, notification procedures, hive locations, public health pesticides to be used, and areas that are routinely sprayed from survey data.

Needed Action: Mosquito control has a proven track record of not harming bees. EPA should be directed to conduct the necessary risk/benefit review of pesticides and where necessary provide for additional mitigations measures to protect pollinators rather than using blanket bans on pesticides uses. Further, Congress should fully fund research efforts the explore mitigation measures to protect pollinators while allowing mosquito control to fulfill their public health mission.