

Pollinator Strategy – EPA Talking Points

- In June 2014, President Obama issued a memo (PM) calling on Federal agencies to increase and coordinate their efforts to improve pollinator health by developing an integrated strategy. The memo established a Task Force co-chaired by USDA and EPA to develop the strategy.
- Strategy released on May 19th – comprehensive plan to work across the Fed govt w/partners to address research, education, and management challenges related to pollinator health.
- Strategy expands on actions already being taken by Fed agencies, includes short and long term changes to restore pollinators to healthy levels, and addresses the multiple factors that impact pollinator health (e.g., land use practices, declining forage, pests and disease, pesticides and bee biology).
- Three overarching goals – 1) reduce HB overwintering loss to no more than 15% w/in 10 yrs; 2) increase monarch butterfly pop to 225 million by 2020; and 3) restore/enhance 7 mill A of pollinator habitat over the next 5 yrs.
- Includes a Pollinator Research Action Plan to gather the scientific information/data needed to better understand and recover from pollinator loss, a pollinator public education and outreach plan, pollinator BMP guidance for Federal buildings and designed and natural landscapes. And identifies public/private partnerships recognizing that the Feds cannot fix this problem on their own.
- EPA Activities – most deal with mitigating the effects pesticides (where we have regulatory influence). Pollinator protection is a priority for EPA, given that bee pollination and insect control are essential to the success of agriculture. Goal is to create space between the use of pesticides and times when pollinators are present during use.
 - Science:
 - EPA is committed to using best available science to support pesticide decisions using a new harmonized risk assessment (RA) framework developed w/Canada (Pest Management Regulatory Authority or PMRA) and CA DPR – would apply to new actives and existing chemicals undergoing Registration Review chemicals. Appendix A (pg A-8) of the strategy specifies the chemicals that would be evaluated in 2015 using this pollinator framework; the list will be updated annually. Also includes implementation and outreach of guidance of pollinator data requirements to inform the new pollinator RA framework.
 - Regulatory decisions:
 - PM specifically tasked EPA w/assessing the risks of pesticides including neonics - accelerating the schedule for re-evaluation of the neonics. Beginning w first phase of pollinator RA for imidacloprid at end of 2015 – finishing in 2017.
 - New use policy for neonics – EPA will likely not approve these new uses until all the necessary data has been submitted and the pollinator RAs are complete
 - Risk management /mitigation measures –
 - PM directed EPA to engage state and tribal agencies to develop pollinator protection plans and to take appropriate risk mitigation actions to protect pollinators – Marietta to discuss the recent release of a proposal to restrict the use of pesticides that are acutely toxic to bees in parallel w/encouraging development of state pollinator protection plans.

- W/respect to pesticide-treated seeds, EPA has been working w/the ASTA, equipment manufacturers, and pesticide registrants to reduce exposure of unintended dust that result from planting operations of treated seed. Includes development of alternative lubricants and seed coatings which enhance the ability of the pesticide to stick to the seed.
 - Working w/partners such as the Honey Bee Health Coalition (HBHC) and the Pollinator Partnership (PP) as well as commodity groups to develop BMPs and IPM programs to examine mitigation measures beyond the label.
 - EPA is also committed to expediting the review of new Varroa mite control products; most recently registered a new product using PMRA data reviews
 - Intend to issue a draft framework later this summer that outlines an approach to protect monarch butterflies.
- Also includes incorporation of measures to encourage and enhance pollinator habitat at EPA funded green infrastructure and Superfund remediation projects (OW and OSWER) and to develop pollinator friendly landscapes at EPA owned facilities.