

Our industry is working to protect bee health

The industry is working to put more effort targeting the biggest, known threats to pollinators: varroa mites, disease and lack of nutrition.

While bee health is a complex issue, research shows the biggest factors are Varroa mites, microbial diseases, nutrition problems, bee management practices, and climate change. The Varroa mite is an external parasite that attacks both adults and young honey bees. Varroa Mites weaken bees and transmit deadly viruses while they feed. Untreated or unmonitored, the mites can cause honey bees to abscond from their hives or cause colony death.

Members of our industry are focused on solving the Varroa Mite challenge and promoting more pollinator-friendly forage to improve nutrition and bee health. RISE was a partner in the National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and the Pollinators, along with the Pollinator Partnership, the Honey Bee Health Coalition, commodity groups (e.g., Cotton Council, Minor Crop Alliance, Almond Board), and the agrochemical industry (e.g., CropLife America, Responsible Industry for a Sustainable Environment).

More research is needed and understand the many factors contributing to bee health and take action to make a difference in promoting pollinator health.

While we work to promote bee health, we are working to protect homeowners and their families.

Limiting responsible homeowner access to neonicotinoids removes safe and effective tools to manage difficult and harmful pests, putting people at risk while not promoting bee health. Neonicotinoids give homeowners and gardeners safer options for common insect problems, when used according to label directions. Neonicotinoids offer solutions to sucking and chewing insects, such as white grubs and aphids. Neonicotinoids also control fleas and ticks. Ticks are a serious public health threat as they transmit Lyme disease. In 2017, Vermont had more than 5,000 reported cases of Lyme disease, the highest in two decades.

We strongly support the careful, strategic approach called Integrated Pest Management, or IPM. IPM is a holistic, comprehensive approach that considers all control and prevention tools – in order to observe, identify, solve, and prevent insect, weed or other pest problems. IPM is the industry best practice and used by my colleagues throughout the state. Following a comprehensive IPM strategy means we use pesticides responsibly – and only when needed. And, reading and following all pesticide label instructions is another way people can ensure they are protecting pollinators while managing harmful outdoor pests.