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Pollination Fast Facts: Farmers & Ranchers

What do pollinators mean to your land?



- Native bees, butterflies, beetles, ants and flies are all valuable crop pollinators.
- Pollinating insects help to increase your crop yields and add money to your bottom line.
- Inadequate pollination will reduce your yields, result in inferior flavor, produce smaller, misshapen fruits with fewer seeds, slow fruit maturation, increase disease in fruit and take money from budget.
- In the United States, pollinators help you and others to produce nearly \$20 billion worth of products annually.
- Native insects act as a cushion when managed honey bees and bumble bees are in short supply.
- It is estimated that these beneficial native insects can provide up to 30% of your pollination needs. Unfortunately, these pollinators are in serious decline.
- Our farm and ranch lands that support pollinators are disappearing at the alarming rate of 3,000 acres a day. The remaining farm and ranch lands lose pollinators' valuable services as their surrounding habitat declines.

What can you do for pollinators?

- **Increase** the numbers of pollinators on your agricultural lands. This will support other wildlife such as birds and game animals, improve the quality of water runoff, decrease your soil loss, and reduce your need for expensive pesticides. By cooperating with government programs for improving pollinator habitat, you may be qualified for financial support. Check with your local state extension office or soil conservation district.
- **Learn** how to reduce the direct exposure of pollinators to pesticides and how to protect critical nesting sites and food sources for beneficial insects & pollinators.
- **Restore** pollinator friendly practices at your farm. Study the habitat on your land: look for areas that can support all kinds of pollinators and other wildlife.
- **Renew** forage and nesting habitats by adding flowering plants, hedgerows, butterfly way stations and other shrubs.
- **Expand your efforts.** Use reduced-tillage practices (many native bees live in the soil). Start to develop riparian (streamside) zones for wildlife habitats and corridors. Allow crops to bolt to give these pollinators additional food sources and to encourage them to stay around for when you have need of them.

