

## The Role of Bees

Tiny as they are, honey bees play a key role in Iowa's agroecosystem – to the tune of an estimated \$92 million annually as plant pollinators. Iowa beekeepers manage around 30,000 colonies of honey bees that produce well over 3 million pounds of honey annually. Many insecticides used to control insects can be poisonous to bees and other beneficial insects. Colonies of bees can be severely affected by improper use of insecticides. Lack of awareness, rather than intent to do harm, is the underlying cause of most bee poisoning incidents.

## Communicate Before Taking Action

Beekeepers and pesticide applicators can reduce the risks to bees by communicating.

### Sensitive Crops Directory

Beekeepers should list their apiary locations on the Sensitive Crops Directory, created by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. Pesticide applicators must consult the online Sensitive Crops Directory to identify locations of Iowa sensitive crops and apiaries.

### Iowa Bee Rule

This 30-year-old rule establishes cooperation between pesticide applicators and beekeepers to prevent unnecessary bee kills. A 2009 amendment changes the rule related to the application of pesticides near bees. This change has two parts, one regarding beekeepers and registration of their hives; the second applies to commercial applicators and pesticide applications. It states:

- Owners of apiaries, in order to protect their bees from pesticide applications, shall register the location of their apiaries with the state apiarist. Registration shall be on forms provided by the department. The registration expires December 31 each year and may be renewed the following year.
- Between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., a commercial applicator shall not apply to blooming crops pesticides labeled as toxic to bees when the commercial applicator is located within one mile of a registered apiary. A commercial applicator shall be responsible for maintaining the one-mile distance from apiaries that are registered and listed on the sensitive crop registry on the first day of each month.

The amendment to the Bee Rule does not apply to private pesticide applicators. Private applicators need to follow pesticide label directions and precautions but are not subject to the application time restrictions outlined in the amendment.



## Resources To Better Understand Protecting Bees In Iowa

### Sensitive Crops Directory

To search for or register a sensitive crop or apiary  
[www.iowaagriculture.gov/Horticulture\\_and\\_FarmersMarkets/sensitiveCropDirectory.asp](http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/Horticulture_and_FarmersMarkets/sensitiveCropDirectory.asp)

### Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

State Apiarist, Entomology Bureau | 2230 South Ankeny Boulevard | Ankeny, IA 50023  
State Apiarist - PH: 515-725-1481 | Sensitive Crop Registry - PH: 515-242-5028

Pesticide Bureau | Wallace State Office Building | 502 E. 9th Street | Des Moines, IA 50319  
PH: 515-281-8591

### Iowa State University

Pesticide Safety Education Program | 109 Insectary | Ames, IA 50011  
PH: 515-294-1101



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# ACTIONS THAT PROTECT HONEY BEES



## Pesticide Applicators

**DETERMINE NEED**  
Apply insecticides only when needed.

**AVOID DRIFT**  
Do not allow insecticides to drift onto adjacent crops or weeds.

**PLAN APPLICATIONS**  
Apply insecticides when bees are not visiting plants in the area. In general, evening applications are the least harmful to bees.


**MAKE BEST CHOICES**  
Choose the least hazardous insecticide formulation and products whenever possible.

**SAFER FORMULATIONS**  
Liquid or granular applications are less hazardous than dust. Microencapsulated forms of insecticides are most hazardous.

**USE ADDITIVES**  
When spraying close to beeyards (apiaries) where hives cannot be moved or covered, use a drift reducing additive to minimize drift.

**READ LABEL**  
Read and follow all label directions. If the insecticide is toxic to bees, there is a statement in the "Environmental Hazards" section of the label that states, "This product is toxic to bees..."

**SAFER PRODUCTS**  
Pyrethroids (e.g. Asana, Pounce) are less damaging to bees than organophosphates (e.g. Lorsban).



## Beekeepers

**BE AWARE**  
Learn about the insecticides being used in your area. If insecticides with "highly toxic to bees" label statements are being applied to area crops, it may be best to move your hives if possible. The new site should be at least three miles away from the pesticide treated area.

**OPENLY COMMUNICATE**  
Notify growers and commercial applicators in the area of the exact location of your hives. Register your hive locations via the Sensitive Crops Directory, with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

**PLACE STRATEGICALLY**  
Place colonies away from fields that are likely to be treated with insecticides and where they will not be subjected to pesticide drift.

**MARK HIVES**  
Make sure that your current address and phone number are legibly printed on your hives so that you can be contacted if necessary.

**CHECK ROUTINELY**  
Inspect your apiaries regularly so that any problem from insecticide damage is identified quickly and action can be taken to rehabilitate the apiary.