KEY ACTIONS FOR POTATO PRODUCTION

The following actions are essential for sustaining suitable pollinator habitats:

- Offer flowering diversity with continuous bloom spanning the growing season. *
- Provide sites for nesting pollinator species. *
- Develop a thorough IPM program to reduce pesticide use.
- Maintain good communication with beekeepers regarding pesticide applications.
ON-FARM ACTION GUIDE

Habitat and forage
Establishing habitat provisions on your farm is crucial for supporting pollinators. Consider these elements when incorporating pollinator habitat into your farming operation:

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
IPM invests in long-term, preventative practices through ecosystem function. Below is a list of strategies you can use to manage pests and mitigate risks to pollinators:

- Offer areas safe from pesticide application and drift via buffers and precise application management, especially around native bee nesting sites.
- Use selective weed control to reduce impacts of mowing and applications to potential pollinator resources by leaving marginal edges, non-invasive weeds, wildflowers, or habitat patches in/around crops.
- Set aside natural areas to provide beneficial insects with habitat outside potato fields.
- Establish floral strips or hedgerows, which take little or no land out of production, on field edges and other low impact areas on your farm.
- Incorporate appropriate flowering crops into rotation to provide nutritional resources to pollinators.
- Designate locations with untilled, undisturbed soil, lawns, debris, logs, or standing plant material for ground, twig/tunnel, and cavity nesting bees.
- Rotate pesticide classes (a) year to year in the same crop to avoid developing pest resistance and (b) in the same location to avoid pesticide residue accumulation in the soil. Follow label directions and best management practices to minimize risk to pollinators.
- Avoid spraying insecticides during bloom when bees are active, as this practice may be prohibited. Pay special attention to label restrictions.
- Regularly perform farm sanitation procedures to prevent pest outbreaks. Consider using pest-resistant watermelon varieties.
- Adjust irrigation appropriately. Overly-saturated soil with poor water infiltration/drainage increases the risk of root diseases and harmful nematode populations.
- Install habitat to attract beneficial insects, including syrphid flies, green lacewings, and parasitic wasps, to aid with pest suppression.
- Develop a pest monitoring program to inform appropriate control decisions and incorporate adaptive improvements to IPM plans.

* This strategy aligns with regenerative agricultural practices.

SUPPORTING POLLINATORS NEAR POTATOES
This guide is intended for growers and applicators supporting pollinators and pollination services in field-grown potato production systems.

Potatoes have perfect flowers and propagate clonally via tubers. While potatoes do not require pollinators to reproduce, their flowers provide nutrients, drawing pollinators into fields. When properly protected and supported, pollinators enhance farming systems. In practice, planting potatoes year after year in the same field is inadvisable. To avoid associated pest and pathogen risks, growers should implement appropriate crop rotations, many of which are dependent on or benefit from pollinators. Establishing pollinator habitat helps promote healthy soil and crop production.