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National Pollinator Week

When it comes to pollinators, Kansas farmers and ranchers are creating habitat to boost their populations and harness these critters' value. With National Pollinator Week beginning today, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is using the opportunity to promote pollinators, like bees and butterflies. Pollinators provide crucial assistance to fruit, vegetable, and seed crops, but many species are seeing their numbers fall. Agricultural producers across the nation work with NRCS to create ideal habitat for pollinators and increase populations in simple and significant ways.

NRCS offers 37 conservation practices through the Farm Bill to help producers create the perfect places for pollinators to forage and take shelter. "Making room for pollinators on your farm or ranch isn't too difficult or expensive, and NRCS wants to help you make those improvements that will not only benefit pollinators—but help your land as well," Acting State Conservationist Daniel H. Meyerhoff said.

More than three-fourths of the world's flowering plants rely on pollinators to reproduce, equating to one of every three bites of food people eat. Many plants would be unable to reproduce without the help of pollinators. "Bees and other pollinators provide a tremendous ecological service and that's why thousands of producers have worked to attract them to their land," NRCS biologist Andrew G. Burr said. "Creating habitat for pollinators attracts beneficial insects, produces wildlife habitat, reduces soil erosion and improves water quality. Pollinators help keep the whole ecosystem healthy."

Scientists attribute a number of factors, including habitat loss, disease, parasites, and overuse of pesticides for pollinators' peril. Agencies and partners across the country are working on science-based solutions to support pollinators. Each June, NRCS and conservation partners salute pollinators during "National Pollinator Week," set for June 17-23. Learn more: www.nrcs.usda.gov/pollinators.

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