

Fact sheet: Pesticide treatment and bees/pollinators

- Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is a rare but serious disease caused by a virus spread through infected mosquitoes to animals and people. In the United States, approximately 5-10 human cases of EEE are reported annually. It is one of the most severe mosquito-borne diseases in the United States.
- In humans, signs of EEE include the sudden onset of fever, chills, and body and joint aches. EEE infection can also develop into severe encephalitis, resulting in headache, disorientation, tremors, seizures, and paralysis. Permanent brain damage, coma, and death may also occur in some cases. A person cannot get EEE directly from another person or from an animal such as a horse or deer.
- Aerial treatment can quickly reduce the number of mosquitoes in a large geographical area, helping reduce the risk of exposure to arboviruses—like EEE. Aerial treatment has been successfully used in the United States for decades to reduce mosquito populations.
- Like most insecticides, Merus 3.0 could be harmful to bees if they come in direct contact. The insecticide application will occur later in the evening or after dusk when bees are expected to be in their hives. The amount of chemical being sprayed is low and breaks down quickly; the application is not expected to have an impact on bees. Concerned beekeepers can reduce exposure to their bees by covering the hive with wet burlap.
- Any insecticide residue on foliage from treatment the night before should be dry by the next morning. Dry residue is not toxic to pollinators, including bees.
- We are currently in a public health emergency and aerial applications provide the most effective option to suppress the outbreak by reducing mosquito populations. Due to the height and speed the plane will operate, it is not possible to stop the treatment over a single property.