



Frequently Asked Questions

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FARMERS/LANDOWNERS

“The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund is the bees’ buzz! The effort is integrating the very best performing habitat solutions where they are most needed, by bringing landowners and beekeepers together in a program where everyone benefits. It’s our goal to make every available acre the best it can be. It’s truly amazing just how much difference an acre can make when the habitat is engineered for maximum productivity!” – Zac Browning, Co-owner, Browning’s Honey Co., Inc.

Why should farmers and landowners become involved?

The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund works with landowners to convert underutilized and less profitable acreage to wildlife habitat – thus supporting the world’s pollinators. It’s a science-driven solution that designs precise habitats that make a measurable difference in pollinator populations. As part of the program, our coordinators use field mapping to identify the best portions of a field to establish habitat. There are also monetary landowner incentives for the land use and habitat seed mix.

How can landowners become involved?

Contact The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund and begin the application process as soon as possible. Landowners can be a part of building effective habitats for honey bees, monarch butterflies and other pollinators. Landowner incentives include free seed and \$15 per acre to help cover the costs of planting the two pollinator seed mixtures, along with an annual rental payment. Contracts are available for three, four, five or six years. Most landowners opt for six years. Funds are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, so it’s important to enroll before available funding for the year is at full capacity. Learn more and contact us by visiting our website: www.beeandbutterflyfund.org.

What do landowners receive for participating?

- Free seed mixtures, designed with specific goals in mind
- Annual rental payment
- Planting incentive payment
- Contracts for 3, 4, 5 or 6 years

What payments are received for participating in the program?

Planting incentive payments are available at a rate of \$15 per acre. Annual rental payments vary by location.

How many acres can be enrolled in the program?

The program accepts projects that range from 1 acre to 160 acres in size.

Farmers/Landowners FAQs, p. 2

How big is the program right now?

Currently, 124 projects from North and South Dakota have enrolled in the program. In 2017, the program will be available to six states (expanding to Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri). The average project size is 15 acres for six years, with more than 6.58 million milkweed seeds planted to date. There is a waiting list for participants.

How are NextGen Habitat Projects selected?

Biologists consult with each landowner to determine the best practices to establish critical habitat where pollinators can reap the most benefit.

How are these habitats different from others?

The seeding mixtures provided by The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund are designed for high bloom diversity and duration. Each project has two practices – a honey bee mix and a monarch butterfly mix. These habitats are cost-effective – only \$90/acre will establish a perennial habitat! Plus, landowners receive free seeding mixtures, planting incentive payments and annual rental payments.

What pollinators do these critical habitats support?

For this program, enrolled landowners receive two separate seeding mixtures:

- 50 percent of the enrolled acres will be established with a pollinator habitat mixture designed to provide superior forage and nutrition for honey bees. Seeding mixtures will vary by state and geography.
- 50 percent of the enrolled acres will be established with a pollinator habitat mixture designed to provide plants necessary for the life history and nutritional needs of monarch butterflies. Seeding mixtures will vary by state and geography.

Are there any limits to what land can be included in the program?

Land that is currently native rangeland is not eligible for enrollment in the program. Land that is currently in grass cover (non-native rangeland) will need to have the existing grass cover removed through chemical application (using both a fall and spring spraying of a non-selective herbicide) prior to enrollment in the program. Consult a [Pheasants Forever biologist](#) for details related to your site.

Does the land need to be near an apiary (beekeeper)?

One consideration of the application and ranking process is the location of the proposed project to a registered honey bee apiary in the state.

Is hunting still allowed on the land?

There are no requirements related to public access to lands that are enrolled in the program. All rights and decisions regarding access to the land for hunting remain with the landowner.

Can the land still be used for grazing?

Enrolled acres are restricted from haying, mowing, shredding and/or grazing from April 15 to September 30 of each year of the contract. This requirement ensures that the planting benefit of the pollinator habitat is available at the most critical times of the year. Landowners are able to hay or graze the contracted acres outside of the April 15 to September 30 timeline.

Farmers/Landowners FAQ, page 3

Can herbicides be used on the land that is enrolled in the program?

For areas that were formerly in cropland with herbicide application in the preceding 40 months, the herbicide use must be reviewed prior to enrollment by a [Pheasants Forever biologist](#). Land that has had herbicides with a residual carryover applied to it is unlikely to be successful in establishing the pollinator habitat. For details on herbicides and their usage, contact The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund or visit our website at www.beeandbutterflyfund.org.

How is the seed planted?

- Plant the pollinator habitat seeding mixtures into two separate block plantings by May 25 of the initial year of the contract. Do not mix the pollinator habitat seeding mixtures together at the time of planting. While both honey bees and monarch butterflies will use and benefit from each of the pollinator habitat seeding mixtures, they are to be planted in separate plantings to help ensure the success of the planting establishment and development.
- Use a no-till grass drill to ensure the proper planting of the mixtures. Seeding depth is critically important to the success of pollinator habitat seeding mixtures. Due to the nature of the species used in the mixtures and their associated seed sizes, do not plant seeds deeper than 1/8 of an inch.
- Tillage before seeding this mixture is not recommended or encouraged. Using a no-till grass drill allows planting without the use of tillage. If the site has any known history of noxious or invasive weeds like thistles, tillage before seeding will only encourage those aggressive weed species and reduce the success and effectiveness of the seeding mixtures.

Can herbicide or other weed control be used?

An herbicide application of Glyphosate at a rate of 2 quarts per acre prior to the initial seeding of the pollinator habitat seeding mixtures may be necessary to help reduce early weed competition. In areas with known or suspected weed competition, this strategy will help ensure your overall success. If weed competition in the project is a concern, contact The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund for approved weed control options. When necessary, approved weed control options will likely be limited to: shredding at an approved height and frequency, herbicide spot spraying, manual spot weed control or use of a weed wick with approved herbicide and timing.

How are NextGen Habitat Project seed mixes received?

The pollinator habitat seeding mixtures will be provided in the program at no cost to landowners. Our biologists have designed seeding mixtures to meet specific habitat and nutritional requirements for the target species to ensure maximum wildlife benefits are being obtained. All seed orders will be delivered directly to landowners, with the fluffy seed separated from the small, slick seeds. This seed mixture combination is designed for projects that will be planted using a no-till grass drill with multiple seed boxes.