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SPECIALTY GROWERS, PESTICIDE APPLICATORS CAN PROTECT SENSITIVE CROPS BY WORKING TOGETHER

LINCOLN—Specialty crops add diversity and value to Nebraska’s agricultural industry, which is why the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) encourages growers and outdoor pesticide applicators to work together to protect sensitive commercial specialty crops and pollinators from pesticide use. Pesticides include all categories of pest control products such as herbicides, insecticides and fungicides.

“Many non-traditional crops, like grapes and hops, are especially sensitive to pesticides that are critical for producing traditional crops like corn and soybeans,” said NDA Director Steve Wellman. “In order to protect sensitive crops, commercial growers and pesticide applicators need to communicate with one another throughout the planting and growing season to raise awareness of specialty crops and beehives in the area.”

DriftWatch™ and BeeCheck™ are online mapping services from FieldWatch that allow those with commercial specialty crops, organic crops and beehives to report their field locations. Farmers and other pesticide applicators can review the website to see where specialty crops are located. Included in the registry are commercial apiary sites, vineyards, orchards, fruit and vegetable grow sites, nursery and Christmas tree production sites and certified organic crops.

These online mapping services are especially helpful in satisfying new requirements concerning restricted use pesticide (RUP) dicamba products, Wellman said. It’s important for pesticide applicators to learn about the specific products they are using and read and follow product labels. Pesticide applicators planning to use RUP dicamba products are required to complete online training and locate specialty crops in the area before using RUP dicamba products. Online pesticide applicator training is available through Nebraska Extension.

In Nebraska, 673 growers have registered a total of 1,400 specialty crop and apiary sites on DriftWatch™. Those sites are currently found in 82 of Nebraska’s 93 counties.

DriftWatch™ and BeeCheck™ can be found online at fieldwatch.com. Registration is voluntary, free, easy to use and secure. Applicators can frequently view the map, sign up for email alerts for their area, or receive direct data feeds or downloads. NDA monitors the DriftWatch™ website for the state. For more information contact Craig Romary, NDA Program Specialist, at (402) 471-2351.

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