



**FARMERS FOR  
MONARCHS**

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## **UNPRECEDENTED COLLABORATION BRINGS CONSERVATIONISTS AND AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY TOGETHER TO HELP THE ICONIC MONARCH BUTTERFLY**

### *Farmers For Monarchs Collaboration Announced at Commodity Classic*

**ANAHEIM, CA** (Feb. 27, 2018) – [Farmers For Monarchs](#), a broad-based collaboration aimed at addressing on-farm conservation efforts, was launched today at Commodity Classic, America’s largest farmer-led convention and trade show. This unprecedented, united effort by farmers, ranchers, landowners, the agriculture industry, conservation groups and others seeks to encourage and enable the voluntary expansion and establishment of pollinator and conservation habitat. The initiative includes planting milkweed and other habitat along the monarch butterfly seasonal migration route in North America.

“This is a unique moment in time for pollinator health and populations. There are many factors impacting declines in monarch population: loss of habitat is one of them,” said Peter S. Berthelsen, The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund Partnership Coordinator. “That’s why farmers can make huge a huge difference by identifying the opportunities within their current farm and ranch operation that can benefit and support their habitat needs.”

Every fall, monarch butterflies migrate up to 3,000 miles, from the upper Midwest to Mexico, to spend the winter. Upon their return in the spring, monarchs need milkweed plants along the migration route to lay their eggs, as it is the only source of food their young will eat. Monarch butterflies face many challenges that have contributed to a significant decline in the overwintering population as compared to the 20-year average: loss of breeding and food habitats along their migration route, weather and climate change, predators, pathogens and parasites, and less overwintering habitat in Mexico.

“*Farmers For Monarchs* is among the broadest voluntary efforts to date aimed at connecting farmers and ranchers to the education and resources they need to leverage the benefits of planting and restoring pollinator and conservation habitats, including milkweed, on their lands,” said Chris Novak, CEO of the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA), one of more than a dozen partners in *Farmers For Monarchs*. “Farmers are always seeking win-win solutions, and this initiative fits the bill. Finding innovative ways to provide habitat for beneficial species, including birds, bees, and other pollinators, fits with our goals of balancing economic and environmental sustainability.”

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) is currently evaluating monarch conservation efforts along the migration route. In June 2019, it will determine its final listing decision of the monarch and, possibly, its habitat, under the Endangered Species Act. A listing could potentially impact the way farmers manage their land in the future. Voluntary efforts to establish and restore monarch habitat could lead to reversing population losses, potentially rendering a listing unnecessary.

*Farmers For Monarchs* stresses the importance to farmers and ranchers of establishing and expanding monarch habitat in the 2018 and 2019 growing seasons so these efforts can factor into the decision of the USFWS. Farmers can help by:

- Planting habitat on non-farming areas;
- Working with conservation partners;
- Voluntarily registering habitat; and
- Joining local, state or federal incentive programs.

Farmers can visit <http://www.farmersformonarchs.org/> for more resources and information on conservation efforts.

### **About Farmers For Monarchs**

*Farmers For Monarchs* is a united effort by farmers, ranchers, landowners, the agriculture industry, conservation groups and others to encourage and enable the expansion and establishment of pollinator and conservation habitat, including milkweed, along the monarch butterfly seasonal migration route. Current partners include: American Farm Bureau Federation, American Soybean Association, BASF, Bayer, The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund, Dow AgroSciences/DuPont/Pioneer, Monarch Watch, Monsanto, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Corn Growers Association, Saint Louis Zoo, Sand County Foundation, and Syngenta.

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