

Spray meant for Zika mosquitoes kills millions of bees

By Alan Yuhas, The Guardian, adapted by Newsela staff on 09.08.16

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In this August 18, 2016, photo, a queen bee (center left) is visible in a beehive. Around the United States, bees and other pollinators contribute an estimated \$29 billion to farm income. AP Photo/Gemunu Amarasinghe

Beekeepers in the southeastern United States are in trouble. Earlier this week, millions of bees in South Carolina died. The bees were killed by a bug poison called Naled. The poison was meant for a certain type of mosquitoes. Some of these mosquitoes carry the Zika virus.

The virus has spread in South America. It can be dangerous to women who are about to have a baby. Scientists and health experts are worried. Now, it is spreading to the United States.

Nearly 40 people have gotten Zika in South Carolina. Officials are working hard to stop it from spreading. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito carries Zika to people.

These mosquitoes get Zika from humans. The insects bite people to feed on their blood. Then they spread the disease to other people they bite.

Mosquito Poison Is Killing Bees Too

To fight the virus, health experts have asked people to spray the bug poison. Beekeepers are upset, though.

Soon, the beekeepers may not be able to make a living. Beekeeper Juanita Stanley posted a video to Facebook. She showed thousands of dead insects.

“This is what’s left of Flowertown Bees,” a depressed Stanley says in the video. Stanley co-owns the company. She said 2.5 million bees were killed in this spraying.

Bees and other pollinators are important to farms. Sticky pollen from a plant clings to the insect when it lands there. Then the insect flies to another plant. It leaves the pollen there. This helps many fruits and vegetables to grow.

CDC Says Naled Is Safe To Use

Dr. Mike Weyman teaches at Clemson University. He said South Carolina has rules to protect pollinators. They are allowed to spray Naled if there is a health crisis, though. Zika is a health crisis.

Experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Environmental Protection Agency say Naled is far safer than other chemicals. Universities agree with them.

Dr. Kirsten Healy is a scientist. She studies how insects can make people sick. Healy says they should spray to kill the mosquitoes. She also says containers holding water should not be left outside. Mosquitoes like still water.

There have been 35 cases of Zika in Florida. Puerto Rico has had 13,791 cases. Puerto Rico is part of the United States. It is in the Caribbean Sea. In Puerto Rico, doctors fought against using Naled.

The CDC asked Governor Alejandro García Padilla to spray Naled. In July, he said no. He said he is worried. He is afraid Naled could hurt humans and animals.

Quiz

- 1 Select the paragraph from the section "Mosquito Poison Is Killing Bees Too" that BEST explains why bees are helpful.
- 2 Which question is answered in paragraph 1 of the article?
- (A) What is the Zika virus?
 - (B) Why are so many bees dying?
 - (C) Who is against the use of Naled?
 - (D) Where is Zika spreading?
- 3 Which sentence from the article describes the MAIN idea of the article?
- (A) The bees were killed by a bug poison called Naled.
 - (B) The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito carries Zika to people.
 - (C) Beekeeper Juanita Stanley posted a video to Facebook.
 - (D) In Puerto Rico, doctors fought against using Naled.
- 4 What is the MAIN idea of the following paragraph?

The virus has spread in South America. It can be dangerous to women who are about to have a baby. Scientists and health experts are worried. Now, it is spreading to the United States.

- (A) Zika is a dangerous virus that is starting to spread.
- (B) Mosquitoes spread the Zika virus from person to person.
- (C) Experts want to do something to stop the mosquitoes from spreading disease.
- (D) Zika has been found in places like South America and the United States.