



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Farmers At Risk For EEE, Support Science-Based Mosquito Control

CONTACT: MFBF Director of Public Affairs, katelyn@mfbf.net



MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS Aug. 17, 2021 – Massachusetts farmers spend many of their working hours outside. Their busiest time is often late summer and early fall, which puts them at a greater risk for contracting diseases spread through mosquitos, particularly Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). This disease can cause severe illness and possibly lead to death. To maintain the health of the Commonwealth's farmers, their families and employees, the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) is urging towns not to opt out of the aerial spraying program

conducted by the state.

“There are a number of towns choosing to opt out of the aerial spraying program. This is alarming to many farmers and their employees who are at risk for contracting EEE and other diseases that mosquitos carry,” said MFBF President Mark Amato. “As an organization, we are supportive of the science-based efforts that the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural (MDAR) has made to control the mosquito population and urge towns to remain a part of the targeted aerial spraying program. In Massachusetts, aerial spraying is an important part of an integrated mosquito control strategy that includes source reduction, larviciding and personal protection. While EEE has not been found in any mosquitos captured yet this season, it is only a matter of time before it becomes a serious risk. We are concerned about the growing patchwork of opt-outs created by these towns and the reduced effectiveness the state control measures will have on mosquito populations.”

Massachusetts has one of the most progressive regulatory agencies in the country, and the farming community is confident that the insecticide chosen is the safest and most effective available. Impacts on bees are of obvious concern to the farming community. However, MFBF is confident that this spraying will not impact bees. MDAR has been monitoring honeybee hives during previous years spraying events and has not seen any negative impacts. The spray program can exclude certified organic farms.

“If the mosquito samples show that the risk of EEE warrants it, spraying will be conducted by airplane between dusk and dawn in areas of concern,” Amato said. “The state is working to ensure mosquito control occurs in areas where they have found the insect to be carrying diseases that negatively impact human health and the adjoining communities that are at risk.

There is no treatment for EEE and it can cause death or permanent disability in those who survive. While farmers and their employees are taking precautions to ensure their safety, the farming community needs to see science-based pest management implemented (in the form of targeted aerial spraying) to ensure their continued safety. For these reasons, MFBF

continues to urge towns to remain a part of the Commonwealth's aerial spraying program and supports MDAR's mosquito control program.

For more information on EEE in Massachusetts, please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/eee-in-massachusetts>.

###

About Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation is a non-profit organization representing nearly 6,000 family members across the Commonwealth. MFBF is an advocate for farmers, run by farmer members who develop policies through its grassroots process. Its mission statement is to "strengthen a diverse agricultural community by supporting and advocating for Massachusetts farm families." Its vision is to "envision a world with plentiful high-quality agricultural products, productive open land, and a robust and prosperous farming community. We are committed to working with like-minded groups to achieve these goals." For more information about the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, please visit www.mfbf.net.

FOLLOW US

