



Unrestricted Movement of Permitted Insects, Mites and Nematodes for Biological Control of Agricultural Pests, and Movement of Pollinators: all *ESSENTIAL* for maintaining a continuous, safe, supply of fresh food in North America

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To Whom It May Concern:

The health of people in North America depends on access to fresh fruit and vegetables, grown in safe environments, and available in adequate quantities. The outstanding record of providing a high-quality food supply has been dependent on the use of integrated pest management (IPM) for control of agricultural pests. A key to growing crops sustainably with IPM is the use of beneficial arthropods (insects and mites) and beneficial nematodes that control pests. In addition, pollinators are necessary to service many of these crops in the field and in greenhouses. Without these commercially-provided essential agricultural inputs, the quality and quantity of our food supply will be negatively impacted.

Beneficial insects, mites and nematodes necessary for crop protection, and pollinators, are shipped around North America via roads and airlines, regulated and permitted at Federal and state levels, and *living*. As such, they must be delivered overnight to growers for immediate use. Any delay in delivery can result in crop loss for the grower because the beneficials are biologically ready for immediate release into crops. Substantial losses also would be incurred by the producers of these biological control organisms and pollinators if shipping is halted because, as with fresh produce, these products have been in production for many weeks.

Using beneficial insects, mites and nematodes for IPM contributes to the production of a safer food supply. These biological control organisms suppress pests and do not contaminate harvested commodities. They do not transmit human pathogens while controlling pests or pollinating crops. These biological control organisms are transported in sealed boxes and there is zero evidence that they harbor or transmit coronaviruses.

During the current COVID-19 crisis, we cannot afford a reduction of our fresh food supply. Companies in North America that produce and distribute biological control organisms for crop protection daily ship them live across our borders. They ship in well-sealed containers that do not require opening because they already move under federally issued permits. We are now corresponding with state and Federal regulators to ensure our beneficials are being granted the same priority as other essential agriculture industry needs (i.e. fertilizers, crop enrichment chemicals).

The Association of Natural Biocontrol Producers (ANBP) and its members ask that beneficial insects, mites and nematodes for use in crop production be *exempt* from any proposed restrictions in cross border movement. It is essential to keep our biological control organisms and pollinators moving to protect North America's most valuable resource, our high-quality food supply. Delaying or restricting movement of these pest management products will negatively impact the yield and quality of our fresh foods.

On behalf of the ANBP and our Members,

Lynn LeBeck, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Contact via: exdir@anbp.org; Association of Natural Biocontrol Producers (ANBP), P. O. Box 1609, Clovis, CA, 93613 USA
For more information, visit www.anbp.org