Let’s move forward together

While farming is the biggest job on earth, farmers are not facing the challenge alone. We support productive, sustainable agriculture, allowing farmers to protect the land they hold in trust for future generations while meeting the demands of modern society.

We pledge to:

■ Invest in the right solutions to enable farmers to grow more quality food, more efficiently.

■ Share our expertise to help farmers to make a better life for themselves and their communities.

■ Never compromise on safety to allow farmers work in a safe environment and produce safe, healthy food.

In everything we do, we will play our part in leaving a positive environmental inheritance.

We stand shoulder to shoulder with farmers. Together, we will move forward on our journey.

The Monarch Butterfly Research Project

Acting responsibly toward society and the environment is imperative in today’s world. Not only is it the right thing to do, it is a critical factor for long-term business success. BASF develops practices that enable farmers to be profitable and achieve high yields while caring for the environment. These are not mutually exclusive objectives – in fact, they go hand-in-hand.

■ Sustaining the Monarchs

Take the case of Monarch butterfly populations, which have been declining in the United States since the late 1990s. One of the many factors thought to be contributing to this decline is the loss of milkweed plants growing on farmland. Milkweed is a critical component in the Monarchs’ reproduction cycle. By allowing milkweed and nectar-producing species to grow on land not reserved for crops, American farmers can play a key role in helping to increase the Monarch butterfly population.

■ Standing up for butterflies

BASF is playing its part with Living Acres, a research initiative focused on helping increase the Monarch butterfly population through establishing milkweed on non-crop areas of the farm. These include alleyways, roadsides, ditches, garden edges, bushy or wooded areas as well as grassy areas near grain bins or next to tractor sheds.

This is about leveraging our expertise in research and development to find out how we can provide practical help for farmers to increase biodiversity on their farms and ensure they continue to fulfill their important role as stewards of the land.
“Sustainability and biodiversity are two important areas of focus for BASF. Living Acres puts years of research and development experience to work to find a way for biodiversity to exist alongside modern agriculture.”

Max Safarpour, Director of Global Regulatory & Government Affairs, BASF

The Importance of Butterflies
- Butterflies are part of a healthy environment. Areas rich in butterflies and moths are rich in other invertebrates, which collectively provide a wide range of environmental benefits, including pollination and natural pest control.
- Butterflies support a range of other predators and parasites, many of which are specific to individual species, or groups of species.
- Butterflies have been widely used by ecologists as model organisms to study the impact of habitat loss, fragmentation, and climate change.
- The butterfly’s life-cycle teaches children about the natural world. The transformation from egg to caterpillar to chrysalis is considered one of the wonders of nature.

Where to plant milkweed
- Farms are full of non-crop areas that can be put to use to increase biodiversity. By planting milkweed and other nectar plants in non-crop areas of farms, farmers can support biodiversity and a flourishing Monarch butterfly population alongside high-production agriculture.

Tips for success – 7 steps of milkweed
- 1. Seed/root
- 2. Pot
- 3. Plant
- 4. Spread
- 5. Water
- 6. Grow
- 7. Mow

Milkweed Refuges in Non-crop Areas
- Milkweed and nectar plants around garden edges invite monarchs to the farmstead.
- Grassly areas between grain bins or next to tractor sheds make great patches for butterfly gardens.
- Unproductive portions of fields can support a milkweed stand with little encroachment into a clean field.
- Milkweed and nectar plants can replace plants that already grow alongside alleyways, roadides or in ditches.

The life of the Monarch
- The majority of Monarchs fly north from central Mexico in spring and summer, landing in central and eastern parts of the United States and southern Canada. During this migration, adult female Monarchs lay eggs only on milkweed plants. When the eggs hatch, the resulting larval feed on milkweed leaves. Major stretches of farmland lie within the Monarch’s migration path.

Discovering and sharing best practice
The important message to farmers is that they can grow areas of milkweed and help increase Monarch butterfly populations without any impact to their agricultural productivity or farming operations. Our initial research shows that creating milkweed refuges takes an upfront investment of time, but once established they should support themselves year after year with minimal effort.

Unproductive portions of fields can be reintroduced into non-crop areas without it becoming a burden on productivity. Through science and innovation, we are enabling farmers to meet the needs of society – now and into the future. Together, we can make a difference and contribute to supporting the Monarch butterfly.
Monarch butterfly populations have plummeted 90 percent in the last twenty years.

The Monarch is the only butterfly known to make a two-way migration, similar to birds.

Millions of newly hatched Monarch butterflies, who have never been to their ancestral breeding grounds, return to the very trees that their parents roosted in before they were born.

Monarchs can produce four generations during one summer.

Monarch butterflies are known for the incredible mass migration that brings millions of them to California and Mexico each winter, a journey of up to 3,000 miles.

Monarchs can travel between 50 to 100 miles a day, flying at speeds ranging between 12 to 25 miles an hour.

The vast majority of Monarch butterfly reproduction occurs in the northern-central region of the United States, known as the Corn Belt.

Over 100 species of milkweed have been identified as native to the United States and Canada.

Did you know ...

Monarchs can produce four generations during one summer.

CONTACTS

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