**Two-Spot Cotton Leafhopper Confirmed in Alabama: What Beekeepers Need to Know**

Professionals with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System have recently confirmed the presence of the invasive **two-spot cotton leafhopper** (also called the cotton jassid) in Alabama cotton fields.

**Why This Matters to Beekeepers:**
Honey bees commonly visit cotton blooms to collect nectar and, at times, honeydew from aphids. Some beekeepers place colonies near cotton fields to build honey stores for harvest or winter feed, while others live in agricultural areas where cotton is a major crop.
To control the jassid, farmers are applying **Bidrin** (active ingredient: *dicrotophos*), a systemic organophosphate pesticide. Unfortunately, organophosphates are highly toxic to honey bees. When spraying coincides with cotton bloom, the risk of bee losses rises sharply—sometimes leading to dead bees at hive entrances, on bottom boards, or in severe cases, collapse of entire colonies.
**Steps Beekeepers Can Take**

- **Avoid field edges:** Place hives as far as possible from cotton field perimeters.
- **Use natural cover:** Position colonies under trees or shrubs, which provide some protection from aerial drift.
- **Avoid closing hives:** Sealing hives during the day can cause deadly overheating.
- **Temporary cover option:** For small-scale beekeepers who cannot relocate colonies, draping a thin, breathable sheet over hives may reduce exposure (leave ventilation space at the bottom).
- **Feed syrup inside the hive:** Offering supplemental feed before spraying may encourage bees to stay inside.
- **Communicate with farmers:** Building good relationships and learning spray schedules is the most effective way to reduce incidents.

If you observe unusual bee deaths near cotton fields, **please report it immediately** so it can be investigated