

Support for Research Related to Honey Bee Health and Colony Collapse Disorder in Honey Bees

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Background and Status

The honey bee is not native to the United States, yet this insect, along with native pollinators, is considered to be an essential component of our agricultural economy. Many of our crops require insects to successfully accomplish the pollination process. Without this critical pollination, crops such as almonds, apples, cucumbers, squash, watermelon, along with many berry crops, would not be produced. Honey bees are highly efficient and capable of moving pollen from one flower to another, ensuring fruit set, proper development, more fruit, and viable seed. Recent estimates place the value of honey bee pollination for agricultural crops at \$15 billion annually.

During the course of the last five years, there have been reports that significant numbers of bee colonies in the United States have been lost to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), a disorder whose cause has yet to be fully determined. While considerable

research and investigation has been dedicated to determining the specific cause(s) of this disorder, no final determinations have been made. However, it is unlikely bee colony losses experienced over the past several years can be pinpointed to just one or several sources; rather, these declines are likely the result of multiple interacting factors.

National Plant Board-Policy Directives

The NPB fully supports those research initiatives that would assist in addressing honey bee health in general, including specific concerns related to CCD. It is expected this research is key to the restoration of feral bee populations and managed bees across the country, thus ensuring adequate pollination services are available for the nation's agricultural crops. The NPB fully supports an adequate funding level that is needed to conduct this critical research.