

Coordinated Approach to Protect and Safeguard the U.S. Apiary Industry

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Background and Status

While the honey bee is not native to the United States, the honey bee, along with native pollinators, are considered to be an essential component of our agricultural economy. Many crops require insects such as the honey bee and native pollinators to successfully accomplish the pollination process. Without insect pollination, crops such as almonds, apples, cucumbers, squash, watermelons, and many berry crops could 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. Current estimates place the value of honey bee pollination for agricultural crops at \$15 billion annually.

Since the mid-1980's, the honey bee has been plagued by multiple pests, including mites, viral diseases, and other pests of concern, both domestic and introduced. The result has been a dramatic reduction in the honey bee population forcing producers to rent hives to ensure successful pollination. Coupled with these pest issues, the Africanized honey bee continues to spread across the southern area of the United States. The Africanized honey bee is a highly aggressive and invasive pest directly impacting the honey bee package and queen production industries. As important are the direct threats of this invasive bee to human and animal health and safety.

National Plant Board-Policy Directives

The National Plant Board (NPB) commends USDA, APHIS, PPQ for recognizing the need and providing funding for initial states to conduct a comprehensive apiary survey. The NPB requests that USDA, APHIS, PPQ allocate additional funding for expanding this

national survey to all states with the objective of establishing a baseline survey for both honey bees and native pollinators on an annual basis.

The NPB also requests that USDA, APHIS, PPQ prohibit the movement of honey bees and honey bee products into the United States until such time as scientifically-based research is conducted to confirm the impacts of exotic viruses and other pathogens to beekeeping.

The NPB requests that USDA, APHIS, PPQ enter into trade discussions with the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) encouraging this organization to unilaterally protect North American beekeeping from the risks of pathogen introduction. Specifically, negotiations should include discussions related to uniform agreements on acceptance of queen bees and packages into NAPPO member countries.

The NPB requests that USDA, APHIS, PPQ formally declare the Africanized honey bee sub-species as an invasive pest posing a direct threat to human and animal health/safety and to the apiary industry.

The NPB requests for USDA, ARS to investigate and revise current laboratory and field methodologies critically needed to provide prompt and precise identifications to respond in emergency conditions. The NPB advocates the continued development and support of those methods needed to effectively respond to emerging honey bee pests and pathogens.