



THE CENTRAL PLANT BOARD

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CENTRAL PLANT BOARD 2009 Annual Meeting Resolution No. 5 National Survey, Honey Bee Imports, and Pests and Pathogens

Importation of honey bees from other countries is occurring in unprecedented numbers and other petitions are being reviewed by USDA/APHIS. Tremendous losses of honey bee colonies in recent years occurred due to “colony collapse disorder” or other unresolved causes. Viral diseases have been introduced into the U.S. and are vectored by introduced parasites. These events prove undoubtedly that the U.S. beekeeping industry is vulnerable to other exotic pests and the USDA should take stricter measures to prevent the introduction of exotic pests. But first, a baseline of honey bee diseases, parasites and other pests of honey bees must be established to adhere to international policy and trade agreements in order to restrict movement of honey bees into the U.S. This pest baseline can only be established through a thorough national survey.

The United States in compliance with the Federal Bee Act permits the importation of honey bees under permit from Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In 2008, more than 60,000 packages of honey bees were imported into the United States from Australia. *Apis ceranae* has recently been identified in Australia. *Apis ceranae* is an organism with an unknown parasite and pathogen community, thus posing a risk of pathogen or parasite transfer by Australian honey bees intended for shipment to the United States. Since packaged honey bees from Australia are used to produce colonies of honey bees that are placed in close association to domestic colonies in the US, this increases the potential for exposure of US honey bee colonies to additional health threats.

The USDA-APHIS-PPQ is required to monitor the importation of honey bees in order to ensure compliance with the Federal Bee Act, and to protect honey bee colonies from unwanted honey bee pests and pathogens. Currently, the USDA-APHIS-PPQ is unable to effectively monitor honey bee importation because such shipments are not uniquely identified on import records.

The potential for identification of new honey bee pathogens, parasites and undesirable races of honey bees requires that quick and reliable identification methods be developed for use in both laboratory and field evaluations. New knowledge for pathogen identification, including such tools as the Bee Path Chip offer guidance for the development of effective detection methods. The Apiary Inspectors of America (AIA), an organization of state regulatory officials, which exists with purpose of protecting the health and welfare of honey bee colonies, have previously requested that the USDA-ARS set up a quick and immediate identification system for honey bee pests and pathogens. In particular, there is a need to provide quick identification systems for *Tropilaelaps clareae*, *Nosema ceranae*, *Apis mellifera scutellata* (AHB) and *Apis mellifera capensis*, and other parasites and diseases not yet found in the United States.

RESOLVED, by the Central Plant Board at its 85th annual meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, March 5, 2009, urgently request USDA, APHIS to fund and implement a national survey as soon as possible for *Tropilaelaps clareae*, virus complexes, varroa species and their variants as well as other organisms capable of adversely affecting honey bee health. Such survey work should involve collaboration with state agencies for the collection and preparation of samples for USDA analysis. The Central Plant Board requests that adequate funding be provided for this much needed baseline survey beginning in 2010.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that USDA-APHIS-PPQ conduct a transparent new risk assessment of the threat to the health of the U.S. beekeeping industry from the continued importation of honey bees from Australia due to the changing conditions in Australia.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the International Trade Commission properly code imported honey bees in a manner that allows the USDA-APHIS-PPQ the ability to identify and track all honey bees imported from foreign countries.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the USDA-ARS proceed with the development of methods for the identification of emerging honey bee pathogen and pest species, and that USDA-ARS review and revise current methodologies to meet the need for quick and effective tools to meet both field and laboratory emergency management identification needs.

Distribution:

Thomas Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture
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