



SOUTHERN PLANT BOARD

April 9-12, 2006

Savannah, Georgia

RESOLUTION No. 2

ADDRESSING USDA-ARS AND APHIS RESPONSE TO BEE PEST INTRODUCTIONS

The introduction and progressive movement of the Africanized honeybee (AHB), *Apis mellifera scutellata* has been verified in a number of southern states. In the last 15 years, the AHB has become established in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, California and Nevada. Most recently, detections of AHB have been made in Florida, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. The situation has created considerable concern in the AHB positive states, along with elevated concern in other states. Based on this elevated level of concern, it is anticipated an increased number of suspect samples will be collected and transmitted to USDA-ARS for identification. Given the importance of honey bee pollination to the agricultural industry, potential impact of AHB on public safety, pets, and livestock, and the need to minimize the spread of AHB, it is imperative for state regulatory officials to act rapidly when suspect swarms or colonies are detected. An effective state response requires both accurate and timely diagnostic reports be provided from confirming laboratories. Additionally, the states must be reassured that identification protocols utilized for confirming AHB in the labs are current and reliable.

Further, beekeepers in the southern United States are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain healthy productive bee colonies due to a complex of bee pests and diseases. In general, parasitic *Varroa* mites, viruses and the bacteria they vector, and the small hive beetle along with companion pests such as the wax moth all require controls that do not universally exist at this time. Finally, on a consistent basis, overall honey bee health and nutrition is not currently being met.

RESOLVED by the membership of the Southern Plant Board at its annual meeting in Savannah, Georgia on April 12, 2006, that USDA-ARS provide determinations of Africanization for honey bee samples within 14 days or less. The Southern Plant Board also urges USDA-ARS to reevaluate the current methodologies and determine the best method for confirming Africanization of honeybee populations and to work cooperatively with southern states to develop and implement uniform Africanized Honey Bee Action Plans that include best management practices, educational outreach, and public safety activities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Southern Plant Board members urge USDA-ARS and the USDA-APHIS-PPQ place additional emphasis and priority necessary to initiate and fund research and survey for the Varroa mite, small hive beetle, wax moth control research, with renewed emphasis on general honey bee health and nutrition.

Motion to Adopt: Tomm Johnson

Seconded by: Richard Gaskella

DISTRIBUTION:

Honorable Michael Johanns, Secretary of Agriculture
Dr. Chuck Lambert, Deputy Under Secretary, USDA
Dr. Edward Knipling, Administrator, USDA-ARS
Dr. Kevin Hackett, National Program Leader USDA-ARS
Gus Douglass, Chairman, Animal and Plant Industries Committee, NASDA
Dr. Richard Dunkle, Deputy Administrator, USDA-APHIS-PPQ
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