



Southern Plant Board

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SOUTHERN PLANT BOARD MEETING *April 19-22, 2009* *Greenville, South Carolina*

RESOLUTION NUMBER 6

NATIONAL SURVEY, HONEY BEE IMPORTS, AND PESTS AND PATHOGENS

In recent years, tremendous losses of honey bee colonies have occurred, perhaps due to “colony collapse disorder” or other unresolved causes. Further, viral diseases have been introduced into the U.S. and continue to be vectored by introduced parasites. These events continue to demonstrate the vulnerability of the U.S. beekeeping industry to many exotic pests. Yet, importation of honey bees from other countries continues to occur in large numbers. In order to fully establish the status of honey bee pests, parasites and diseases in the U.S., a comprehensive national baseline survey is needed as a first step in effectively developing international policy and trade agreements related to the movement of honey bees into the U.S.

The United States, under 7 CFR 322-Bees, Beekeeping Products, and Beekeeping Equipment Regulations, 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 alone. *Apis ceranae*, an organism with an unknown parasite and pathogen community, has been recently identified in Australia. With this detection, there is a growing concern 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 U.S., this increases the potential for exposure of U.S. 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 their federal regulations such that honey bee colonies are protected 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, offers guidance for the development of effective detection methods. Specifically, there is a need to provide quick identification systems for *Tropilaelaps clareae*, *Nosema ceranae*, *Apis mellifera scutellata* (AHB), *Apis mellifera capensis* and other parasites and diseases not yet found in the United States.

RESOLVED by the membership of the Southern Plant Board at its annual meeting in Greenville, South Carolina on April 22, 2009 that we urge both USDA, APHIS, and USDA, ARS to fund and implement a national survey that would incorporate surveys for *Tropilaelaps clareae*, virus complexes, varroa species and their variants, capable of affecting honey bee health.

Member States

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Southern Plant Board, that we request USDA, APHIS, and ARS work jointly together to develop tools and enhance methods to assist in providing effective identification systems for survey and laboratory identification work for honey bees.

Motion to adopt: Harry Fulton, MS
Seconded by: Mike Evans, GA

DISTRIBUTION:

Cindy Smith, Acting Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs
Rebecca Bech, Deputy Administrator, USDA, APHIS, PPQ
Edward Knipling, Administrator, USDA, ARS
Vic Harabin, Eastern Regional Director, USDA, APHIS, PPQ
Phil Garcia, Western Regional Director, USDA, APHIS, PPQ
Bob Ehart, NASDA
Gray Haun, President, National Plant Board
Regional Plant Board Presidents

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