



ALASKA ALBERTA ARIZONA BRITISH COLOMBIA CALIFORNIA COLORADO HAWAII IDAHO MONTANA  
NEVADA NEW MEXICO OREGON REPUBLIC OF MEXICO WASHINGTON UTAH WYOMING

**WESTERN PLANT BOARD OFFICERS**

*LYLE WONG, PRESIDENT*

*DONNA RISE, VICE PRESIDENT*

*JOHN CARAVETTA, TREASURER*

*MITCHEL YERGERT, SECRETARY*

**WESTERN PLANT BOARD**

**90<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

**May 5 – 7, 2009**

**Boise, Idaho**

**RESOLUTION No. 2**

**NATIONAL SURVEY, HONEY BEE IMPORTS, AND PESTS AND PATHOGENS**

Importation of honey bees from Australia and New Zealand is occurring in unprecedented numbers and other petitions are being reviewed by USDA/APHIS. Tremendous numbers of honey bee colonies in recent years have been lost due to “colony collapse disorder” and other unresolved causes. Viral diseases reinforce the prevailing concern that some previously unknown diseases have been introduced into the U.S.; some may be vectored by introduced parasites. These events demonstrate that the U.S. beekeeping industry is vulnerable to exotic pests and that stricter measures are needed to prevent entry of new pests that can threaten the health and wellbeing of honey bees in the United States.

Before this can happen, a baseline of honey bee diseases, parasites and other pests of honey bees must be established. This will help the U.S. adhere to international policy and trade agreements in order to restrict movement of additional pests of honey bees.

This pest baseline can only be established through a thorough national survey. The U.S. (through the Federal Bee Act) permits the importation of honey bees from Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In 2008, more than 60,000 packages of honey bees were imported into the U.S. from Australia alone.

Recently, Australian beekeepers have discovered *Apis ceranae* which 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 U.S. 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 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 the 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*, *Noxema ceranae*, *Apis mellifera scutellata* (AHB) and *Apis mellifera capensis*, and other parasites and diseases not yet found in the U.S.

**RESOLVED**, by the Western Plant Board at its 90<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Boise, Idaho, May 5 - 7, 2009, urgently request USDA, APHIS to fund and implement a national honey bee survey as soon as possible for pests including *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 Western 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  
Cindy Smith, Administrator, USDA-APHIS  
Rebecca Bech, Deputy Administrator, USDA-APHIS-PPQ  
Edward B. Knipling, Administrator, USDA-ARS  
Shara L. Aranoff, Chairman, International Trade Commission  
Dennis vanEnglesdorp, President, Apiary Inspectors of America  
Gray Haun, President, National Plant Board

Geir Friisoe, President, Central Plant Board  
Ann Gibbs, President, Eastern Plant Board  
Lyle Wong, President, Western Plant Board  
Gene Cross, President, Southern Plant Board