



FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA 2024

I. FARM BILL AND OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS 2024

Many of the Farm Bill authorizations expired in September of 2023. Congress extended those provisions into 2024 to provide more time for House and Senate negotiations. The following Farm Bill issues are priorities for AHPA:

- EXTENSION AND EXPANSION OF THE EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ELAP): The ELAP program is the only federal disaster program available to beekeepers. The industry does not have a traditional RMA crop insurance program common to other agriculture producers at this time (rainfall insurance aside).
 - Reauthorize the ELAP program for honey bees. Beekeepers have been eligible for payments under the program beginning with the 2008 Farm Bill authorization.
 - Support the Thune (R-SD)-Lujan(D-NM) Livestock Disaster Assistance Improvement Act (S.555): The bill clarifies the ELAP program for beekeepers, including by setting a statutory normal mortality rate at 15%, standardizing payment amounts, and expanding eligibility to include coverage for drought-related losses (transportation, feed, and reduced honey crops).
 - Support the Panetta (D-CA)-Cammack (R-FL) Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act in the House. And the same bill in the Senate sponsored by Senators Padilla (D-CA) and Tillis (R-NC). The bill provides an exemption from the AGI limitation for farms that get 75% of their income from farming or related farming practices (agritourism, direct-to-consumer marketing of agricultural products, sale of agricultural equipment owned by

person or entity, and other agriculture related activities, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture).

- STRENGTHEN HONEY SUPPLY CHAIN INTEGRITY: Honey producers have long struggled to compete against cheap imports and adulterated products. U.S. producers remain at a competitive disadvantage until there is a clear national standard of identity and corresponding testing and labeling options that enable buyers to identify honey on a country of origin and quality basis. As such, we support the Honey Identification, Verification and Enforcement Act (HIVE Act) (H.R. 4764) introduced by Representative Armstrong (R-ND) in 2023. The bill:
 - Requires the Food and Drug Administration to finally establish a standard of identity for honey and subsequently report to Congress on enforcement actions taken with respect to adulterated or misbranded honey.
 - Reorganize the existing USDA country of origin labeling requirements by utilizing the consumer-familiar ingredient labeling criteria.
 - Countries of origin would be listed in order of predominance, allowing the consumer to discern the origin of blended honey.
- AMS / Marketing Loan: Increase the statutory marketing loan amount to align with current market conditions and make the program more workable for beekeepers. The current statutory rate is \$.69/lb. A more appropriate rate consistent with marketing loan formulas would be +/- \$1.75/lb.
- Honey Bee Research Coordination: extend the 2018 authorized USDA Honey Bee and Pollinator Research Coordinator position within the Office of the Chief Scientist. Amend the authorization to ensure the position maintains its own funding outside of general funds at USDA, thereby ensuring adequate resources and less risk of funding interruptions.
- Honey Bee Research Authorizations: extend honey bee research authorizations at ARS honey bee research labs and various other USDA agencies.
- Conservation / Re-Generative / Re-Forestation: direct funding to projects where managed honeybees can support reforestation and other USDA climate and conservation goals across USDA programs. Include HBHC recommendations on seed mixes and competitive bidding for NRCS technical

advisor contracts. Include honey bee recommendations into any new regenerative farming funding.

II. OTHER LEGISLATION:

- CBP Collections: Enact legislation to recoup interest accrued but not paid to eligible beekeepers under the Byrd Rule. The China Trade Cheating Restitution Act is introduced in both the House and Senate and we will continue to push for the legislation to be enacted on the next moving vehicle. The current score is around \$39 million with part of that recovery going to beekeepers.
- Immigration Reform: reform the H-2A Program so that beekeepers can more easily access workers, keep them here longer, and move them around the country more freely, among other things. Address labor rates resulting from recent administrative action. Legislation has passed the House in recent years but has not had traction in the Senate. While comprehensive H-2A reform is an uphill battle given the deep ending party divisions on immigration, we expect efforts in 2024 to address the wage issue independent of comprehensive reform. We are working with the Agriculture Workforce Coalition on this.

III. FISCAL YEAR 2024/5 APPROPRIATIONS

- Honey Bee Research Funding at ARS: Request \$9 million in additional funding for honey bee research at USDA-ARS honey bee research labs and cooperator labs. Emphasis on core labs: Baton Rouge, Beltsville, and others.
- Honey Bee Research Coordination: fund the USDA Honey Bee and Pollinator Research Coordinator position within the Office of the Chief Scientist at no less than \$400,000.00 to support coordination of research activities across the Department. Remove funding from General Funds and include as a line item within the Office of the Chief Scientist to avoid interruption.
- Trade Enforcement: funding for additional resources, manpower, and technology at CBP to detect fraud and adulteration in imported honey. Instruct CBP to continually report to Congress on the status of those efforts.

- Honey Bee Research Funding / ERS: extend FY 23 funding for dedicated honey bee economist position at ERS to more adequately inform USDA disaster, conservation, and research programs on the priority of managed pollinators within those programs. (\$500k included in FY '23)
- Honey Bee Research Funding NASS: continue annual NASS survey on pollination contracts (\$1.5m in FY'22 & FY '23).
- Policy Riders / Report Language:
 - APHIS: instruct APHIS to conduct a full EIS on tallow mitigation efforts before finalizing any agency decisions, or alternatively to suspend all activities (Supportive language included in FY '23 and FY '24, but the risk continues).

IV. OVERSIGHT / VOLUNTARY MARKET EFFORTS

- USDA Forage Protection / Biocontrol Agents: oppose proposals before APHIS to release bio control agents aimed at mitigating the spread of Tallow and other important honey bee forage.
- USDA Research: continued to support USDA ARS labs with industry collaboration, guidance and direction.
- EPA / FDA: work with the American Beekeeping Federation to engage EPA on clarifying where various miticide products stand re registration & whether there are innovative ways to bring new products to market. Engage EPA and FDA to emphasize the importance of keeping registration authority for miticides under EPA – not FDA – jurisdiction.
- USDA Conservation: improve the amount of pollinator friendly acreage included in the FSA and NRCS conservation programs, including by working to get HBHC seed mix and technical advisor recommendations implemented.

- DOL & DHWage and Worker Protection: work in coalition to ensure that DOL labor rates and definitions for H-2A workers remain competitive to avoid rapid reduction in honey production and pollination services capacity that could result from drastic and unsustainable labor input cost increases. Address various other worker protection rules proposed by this Administration.
- Public Lands Access: improve beekeeper access to public lands by working with the national offices at the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and other overseers of multiple-use lands to provide consistent guidance to local land managers on when and how to approve multi-year beekeeper permits, and to ensure honey bee access is prioritized.