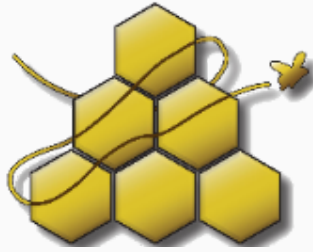


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Remembering Joe Traynor

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Quiet, unassuming, modest and self-deprecating is not how you would imagine describing a titan or elder statesman of an industry but that was Joe Traynor, bee broker, pomologist, apiculturist, bee research philanthropist and dedicated family man. Joe passed away peacefully the morning of August 26, 2023 surrounded by family. His friends, family and the industry mourn their loss.

If you were involved with almonds, almond pollination or California beekeeping you knew Joe Traynor. For over 45 years Joe was the preeminent bee broker in California almond pollination. I first met Joe when I was doing research on honeybee nutrition. It was early February 2002 and I wanted to get some experience with the nutritional aspects of bees going into almond pollination. Joe was referred to me by several commercial beekeepers so I decided I needed to meet this guy in person. Joe gave me the time and place to meet. It was 6 AM at the IHOP on Rosedale Highway in Bakersfield, CA. When I walked into the IHOP I was surprised to see a table full of what I can only describe as “beekeeper types”. Some looking exhausted from too many nights of placing countless pallets of colonies in orchards, others looking fresh and ready to go. They were the inspectors who that day would grade the strength of colonies Joe brokered. Joe paid a very fair price to the beekeepers he brokered and by using inspectors he was able to assure the grower they were getting what they paid for. Included in the group at the IHOP were two USDA bee researchers from Weslaco Texas. Joe not only brokered bees for almond pollination but he helped link researchers with beekeepers and orchards to do their investigations. These studies often helped Joe demonstrate to the growers that stronger bee colonies did a better job of pollination to set a better crop. Being at that nexus between ag science, commercial beekeeping and production agriculture was that sweet spot where Joe placed himself.

Joe was born in Oakland on March 3, 1936 into a family of lawyers. His parents, Roger and Madeline Traynor, had similar aspirations for him but he had fallen in love with California orchards. After graduating from high school in Berkeley, he served two years in the U.S. Army before earning a bachelor's degree in pomology at UC Davis. After graduating, Joe worked with a commercial beekeeper in Bakersfield before

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did a better job of setting nuts on a tree. Years later Joe would be the driving force behind higher rental fees for beekeepers placing bees in almonds. After graduating he worked with fruit and nut growers but always maintained his contacts with the beekeepers. In 1973 Joe started his brokering business, Scientific Ag Company. At the time beekeepers were getting paid \$10 per colony to place their colonies in almond orchards. Soon, to the credit of the Almond Board of California, almond acreage grew rapidly and further research at UC Davis demonstrated the benefits of adequate pollination. Citing these studies, Joe began pushing growers to contract larger colonies and to compensate the beekeeper for these superior bees at the same time Joe pushed his beekeepers to provide an eight frame minimum. That means eight frames in each hive to be at least two thirds covered by bees. Previously four and five frame colonies were the standard. For the extra work to produce the larger colonies Joe convinced the growers to pay a premium price for the pollination service and to Joe's credit, higher yields were observed, the growers were happy. As the almond industry grew, the price of pollination grew nearly 10% per year. Joe was always at the top of the list, he took good care of his beekeepers. Every year in the winter when pollination fees were discussed the first question was always "what's Traynor paying?". When Joe left the brokering business colonies were renting for as much as \$220 per colony. Joe fought hard for the beekeepers he brokered and for the industry. He was unapologetic about pushing the growers and almond industry to compensate the beekeepers fairly. Another of Joe's attributes was generosity. He would contribute two dollars from every colony he brokered to bee research. He would contribute to individual researchers and established nonprofits, anywhere he thought his contribution would get traction and results. Joe was an original board member of Project Apis m., a nonprofit that supports applied research for bees and pollination. Over the years he contributed more than \$500,000 to bee research.

During the almond pollination season Joe would leave his home and family and move into his small upstairs Bakersfield office with a small cot on which to sleep and three phones ringing incessantly from either beekeepers looking to place colonies, growers looking for more colonies or truck drivers with a load of bees that got stuck at the California border inspection. During the pollination season Joe was in his element. Joe's wife Nema (amen spelled backwards) would often bring meals by his office because she knew he would forget to eat. During almond bloom Joe was totally absorbed by all aspects of the process.

To say Joe was an avid reader is an understatement, he was a voracious reader. He was always seen with a book or publication in his hand. During the off-season Joe would routinely send out articles that he thought would be of interest to friends, scientists or beekeepers hoping to get a conversation started. If you know Joe you would know that he liked to "stir the pot" he relished a good discussion. Joe knew his science and loved to debate it. If you ever had the opportunity to visit Joe's office in Bakersfield you would have been confronted by a wall of filing cabinets and papers, magazines and books stacked everywhere. It looked chaotic but if asked about an article Joe could put his fingers on it in seconds, pulling it from the middle of a pile.

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if all of this wasn't enough, Joe was well published. He was the author of numerous articles about bees,

pollination, plant nutrition, honey, pollination ecology and California agriculture policy. He published a regular newsletter and authored three books "Almond Pollination Handbook for Growers and Beekeepers", "Ideas in Soil and Plant Nutrition" and "Honey – the Gourmet Medicine".

In the off season, Joe would escape the heat of the San Joaquin Valley and head to his second home near Lake Tahoe where Joe would swim and hike, spend time with family and read. A favorite day would be to enjoy a morning swim at the rec center then fill his day pack with books, some almonds, raisins, carrots and water then head out a wilderness trail and find a place to read near a quiet lake. His daughter Pamela described Joe as a person who like to keep to himself, though seeing Joe at all the bee meetings and gatherings you would never guess Joe was not a social man, though in reality he enjoyed being alone. He hated small talk but loved a heated discussion especially if there was something new to learn. He enjoyed hiking and bicycle riding. He often took REI bike trips in the summer, he had also taken numerous bike trips with his daughter Pamela including trips to Hungary, Slovakia, Ireland and his last trip was across Scotland, Edinburgh to Glasgow.

Joe's friends already miss him, I know I sure do. He is survived by his wife Nema; brother Michael Traynor; children Peri, Patrick Traynor and Pamela van der Poel; and six grandchildren: Patrick Jr., Christopher, Cosette, Jensen, Niki and Siena.

By: Dr. Gordon Wardell. Dr. Wardell is the former Director of Pollination Operations at Wonderful Orchards. Gordon has been a professional apiculturist for over 30 years and has worked with bees on three continents.

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<https://www.projectapism.org/project-apis-m-blog/remembering-joe-traynor>

2023 NAPPC FARMER RANCHER AWARD - United States

Stuart Woolf - Woolf Farming



Stuart Woolf at Woolf Farming has gone above and beyond to support pollinators in their operations.

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Stuart has served as Chairman of the California League of Food Processors, the Almond Board of California, and on the UC President's Commission of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Stuart currently serves on the board of the California Chamber of Commerce, Western Growers Association and Marrone Bio Innovations. Woolf Farming manages over 7,500 acres of almonds, along with thousands of acres of other crops, in the Central Valley of California. Their operations have quickly adopted pollinator friendly practices and this effort has been led by Stuart, demonstrating by example that farming and conservation go hand in hand. Under the direction of Stuart, Woolf Farming has planted over 550 acres of forage and habitat for pollinators. This included both cover crops and perennial native plants. They have implemented Integrated Pest Management across all orchards, including the use of mating disruption and other non-chemical intervention methods, directly benefiting pollinators by reducing pesticide exposure. This work involved dramatically changing the way they organized their Operations, from removing land to act as set aside habitat, to managing cover crop within the orchards to maximize their benefits to pollinators without impacting their operations. Stuart led the charge in the internal conversation within their operations to incorporate pollinators in many of the decisions being made in their fields. He has continued to provide resources and time for both himself and his staff to have this conversation with their partners and agriculture at large. This has extended to partnering with P2 and providing valuable insight and resources to continue creating change and generating awareness about pollinators in agriculture. These farms also hold Bee Friendly Farming certification.

POPULAR SCIENCE

Female honeybees may pass down 'altruistic' genes

Honeybee genes might make workers serve the queen above themselves.

By [Laura Baisas](#) | Published Oct 18, 2023 1:00 PM EDT

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[Honeybees](#) are a model of teamwork in nature, with their [complex society](#) and hives that generate enough energy to [create an electrical charge](#). They also appear to be some of the rare animals that display a unique trait of altruism, which is genetically inherited. The findings were described in a [study published September 25 in the journal Molecular Ecology](#).

Giving it all for the queen bee

[According to the American Psychological Association](#), humans display altruism through behaviors that benefit another individual at a cost to oneself. Some psychologists consider it a uniquely human trait and studying it in animals requires a different framework for understanding. Animals experience a [different level of cognition](#), so what drives humans to be altruistic might be different than what influences animals like honeybees to act in ways that appear to be altruistic.

In this new study, the researchers first looked at the genetics behind [retinue behavior](#) in worker honeybees. Retinue behavior is the actions of worker bees taking care of the queen, like feeding or grooming her. It's believed to be triggered by specific pheromones and worker bees are always female.

After the worker bees are exposed to the queen's mandibular pheromone (QMP), they deactivate their own ovaries. They then help spread the QMP around to the other worker bees and they only take care of the eggs that the queen bee produces. Entomologists [consider this behavior 'altruistic'](#) because it benefits the queen's ability to produce offspring, while the worker bees remain sterile.

The queen is also typically the [mother of all or mostly all of the honeybees in the hive](#). The genes that make worker bees more receptive to the queen's pheromone and retinue behavior can be

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“People often think about different phenotypes being the result of differences in gene sequences or the environment. But what this study shows is it’s not just differences in the gene itself—it’s which parent the gene is inherited from,” study co-author and Penn State University doctoral candidate Sean Bresnahan [said in a statement](#). “By the very nature of the insect getting the gene from its mom, regardless of what the gene sequence is, it’s possibly going to behave differently than the copy of the gene from the dad.”

A battle of genetics

The study supports a theory called the [Kinship Theory of Intragenomic Conflict](#). It suggests that a mothers’ and fathers’ genes are in a conflict over what behaviors to support and not support. Previous studies have shown that genes from males can support selfish behavior in [mammals](#), [plants](#), and honeybees. This new study is the first known research that shows females can pass altruistic behavior onto their offspring in their genes.

Worker bees generally have the same mother but different fathers, since the queen mates with multiple male bees. This means that the worker bees share more of their mother’s genes with each other.

“This is why the Kinship Theory of Intragenomic Conflict predicts that genes inherited from the mother will support altruistic behavior in honeybees,” Bresnahan said. “A worker bee [benefits more from helping](#), rather than competing with, her mother and sisters—who carry more copies of the worker’s genes than she could ever reproduce on her own. In contrast, in species where the female mates only once, it is instead the father’s genes that are predicted to support altruistic behavior.”

Pinpointing conflict networks

To look closer, the team [crossbred](#) six different lineages of honeybees. Bresnahan says that this is relatively easy to do in mammals or plants, but more difficult in insects. They used honeybee breeding expertise from co-author Juliana Rangel from Texas A&M University and Robyn Underwood at Penn State Extension to create these populations.

Once the bee populations were successfully crossed and the offspring were old enough, the team [assessed the worker bees’ responsiveness](#) to the pheromone that triggers the retinue behavior.

“So, we could develop personalized genomes for the parents, and then map back the workers’ gene expression to each parent and find out which parent’s copy of that gene is being expressed,” Bresnahan said.

The team identified the gene regulatory networks that have this intragenomic conflict, finding that

“Observing intragenomic conflict is very difficult, and so there are very few studies examining the role it plays in creating variation in behavior and other traits,” study co-author and Penn State entomologist Christina Grozinger [said in a statement](#). “The fact that this is the third behavior where we have found evidence that intragenomic conflict contributes to variation in honeybees suggests that intragenomic conflict might shape many types of traits in bees and other species.”

The team hopes that this research will help provide a blueprint for more studies into intragenomic conflict in other animals and plants.

<https://www.popsoci.com/environment/honeybees-altruism/>

Atlas Obscura

The Magic Spells That Herded Medieval Bees

For European beekeepers, “swarm charms” were once a tool of the trade.

by [Andrew Coletti](#) October 20, 2023



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“Metrical charms” were sets of magical instructions for addressing dilemmas with spoken words and actions that combined [herbal medicine, prayer, and ritual](#). Many dealt with the challenges of agriculture, with Old English examples having titles like “For Unfruitful Land,” “For Lost Cattle,” and Wip Ymbe, meaning “For a Swarm of Bees.”

Although it was discovered copied into the margins of an 11th-century manuscript, “For a Swarm of Bees” is believed to be older, from the ninth century. It’s one of the earliest examples of a subset of metrical charms called “swarm charms.” These were magic spells once used by beekeepers across Europe to control and direct their precious honeybees and prevent them from flying off [when they gathered into a swarm](#). “For a Swarm of Bees” begins with physical instructions and ends with what you should say to the bees:

*“Take [some] earth, throw it with your right hand under your right foot, and say:
'I catch it under foot, I have found it. Lo! Earth has power against all and every being, and against malice and against mindlessness, and against the mighty tongue of man.'
And then throw dust over the bees when they swarm, and say: 'Sit you, victory-women, settle to earth! Never must you fly wild to the wood. Be you as mindful of my welfare as each man is of his food and home.'”*

Tossing dirt over the bees would have been just as important as the magic words; perhaps more important, since it would have produced the desired result of getting the confused insects to settle on the ground en masse. The bees are addressed as “victory-women” (sigewif, in Old English) because this term was also used for Valkyries and warrior women, and like them, worker bees are females who wield a “sword” (their stinger). Other swarm charms gave the insects pet names like “little animals,” “beauties,” or “dear ones,” [in languages from German to French to Greek](#). Though most examples come from the Medieval era, swarm charms persisted until as recently as the 19th century, when changes in beekeeping made them obsolete. Experts suggest that new technology and cultural shifts like the Scientific Revolution ushered in a new approach to beekeeping that was less reliant on magic and more conscious of why and when bees swarm.

Today, we understand that a colony of bees functions as a collective “superorganism,” and swarming is “a way for the superorganism to reproduce, and spread those genes around,” explains Gene Kritsky, dean of the School of Behavioral and Natural Sciences at Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Originally an entomologist, Kritsky is an expert on the history of beekeeping, though his research has also covered topics from dinosaurs to Darwin. “I have worked on periodical cicadas as one of my primary areas, and you’ve got to do something in between those 17 years,” he jokes.

Kritsky explains that when a beehive starts to get overcrowded, typically in early summer, the queen

who will mate and keep the original colony going by laying eggs. “One of the major activities the beekeeper does is to sit there and watch,” Kritsky says. Modern beekeepers keep an eye out for signs of swarming and provide ample growing space for their colonies, including empty hives for swarms to move into.

Dividing colonies by moving swarms into new hives was even more essential to beekeeping in the Middle Ages, because of the different methods Medieval beekeepers favored. Early beekeepers in northern and western Europe kept their insects in simple woven straw or wicker hives called skeps, [from an Old Norse word for “basket.”](#) Today, skeps are banned in the United States because they are difficult to inspect for disease, but they’re still available in Europe, and were once so common that they became the basis for the dome-shaped, stylized beehive seen everywhere from the state seal of Utah to Winnie the Pooh.



Today’s boxlike wooden beehives, invented in the 1850s, have removable frames in which the bees are encouraged to exclusively deposit honey while rearing their young in other frames. This allows honey to be extracted from the hive without harming the insects. With skeps, the entire nest had to be scooped out and destroyed to harvest honey and beeswax, which was typically done after killing the colony of bees with smoke.

Skeps were made small to encourage bee colonies to split off into swarms, which could then be

to replenish the population. Because of this cycle, a beekeeper might have two or three times as many active skeps in summer as they did [in winter and spring](#). Moving swarms into skeps required the use of swarm charms in conjunction with physical practices, like throwing dirt over the bees and “tanging,” the rhythmic banging of two metal objects such as two pots, which can also help direct the movement of the swarm. While we don’t know of any recorded swarm charms older than “For a Swarm of Bees,” the Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder described the practice of tanging in the first century, writing that “to cause a swarm of bees to settle, you must strike on bronze vessels.”



Kritsky describes swarm charms as “very much of an ecclesiastical thing.” “For a Swarm of Bees” is unusual among charms of its era for not making [explicit Christian references](#). The “Lorsch Bee Blessing,” composed in Germany around the same time, asked the bees to “please sit quietly and [work God’s will](#).” Instead of being told “Sit you,” the German bees received a Christian scolding: “the Virgin Mary commands you to sit! You don’t have permission to fly off to the woods.” Similarly, a French swarm charm asked the colony of “beauties” to settle down with the reminder that “the beeswax is for the Blessed Virgin, and the honey is mine.”

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and the most-suitable medium for church candles, in part because bees were thought to be chaste, asexual creatures, perhaps [born spontaneously from flowers](#). Bees were also seen as symbolic of an orderly Church hierarchy, with one Medieval bishop comparing a hive to a hardworking convent, though he held the misconception, common at the time, that the queen was a male “Magistrate” [who oversaw the worker “nuns.”](#)

There was also a desire on the part of Medieval church officials to control the lucrative trade of honey—a luxury that provided the only source of concentrated sugar in the Medieval European diet—and to limit the consumption of alcoholic mead, traditionally fermented from the leftover dregs of the honey harvest in pre-Christian northern Europe. Many swarm charms asked bees to be good and produce their honey “for the Church.” Kritsky points out that some Medieval beekeepers would have been permitted to pay the tithe owed to the local Church in skep hives.

In the 1960s, folklorist Austin Fife’s analysis of known swarm charms found that 96 percent of charms from before the 17th century included Christian references, [compared to 58 percent of examples from the 18th to 20th centuries](#). “As beekeeping becomes more rational,” says Kritsky, “they’re removing some of the overt Catholic or Protestant phrases.” “Rational beekeeping” refers to a more scientific, less-mystical approach that includes an increased understanding of the biology of bees. Kritsky points out that in sources from after the Medieval era, “a lot of times they talked about tanging, but they don’t mention the phrases” that go along with it, in contrast to earlier sources that wrote down the charms but didn’t always describe the tanging. This suggests a growing understanding that it was the tanging, not the words, that influenced the swarm.

Our modern wooden beehives were invented in the mid-19th century, which is around the time Kritsky suggests that people stopped using swarm charms. He describes “a growing movement starting in the 1700s, and more so in the 1800s, to no longer kill your bees.” Even before the development of hives with removable frames, this was accomplished with new methods that Kritsky says might be considered “the next innovation of tanging.”

“Driving the bees” involved transferring the skep to a pail and rhythmically banging the outside, forcing the colony out of the skep, after which they could be moved into a new one. Another bee-saving technique of the 19th century was to place a glass jar, open at the bottom, on top of the skep. Because this jar was held at a lower temperature than the warm interior of the hive, the queen would not enter and lay eggs there, meaning the bees would use it only for storing honey and not for rearing babies. When the jar had filled up with pure honeycomb, it could be removed and even brought directly to the breakfast table for serving.

“Beekeepers have been pretty ingenious over the years, developing new technologies,” says Kritsky.

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As beekeepers have innovated new methods, they have also discarded older ones. When Western settlers introduced the European honeybee to the Americas in the colonial era, they left swarm charms behind, and even tanging has not seen much use in modern American beekeeping. Wooden hives, Kritsky explains, “were expensive in Europe, but there was so much wood here they could have wooden beehives. And so we don’t see a lot of skep beekeeping going on in the U.S.”

With the increase of wooden hives with removable frames and “rational beekeeping,” there was less of a need to verbally beg swarms to stay in one place. Are magic words even necessary, since it was really the tanging and other physical actions that did the trick? At some point “they realized,” Kritsky muses, that “the bees aren’t listening.”

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/swarm-charms>



Raw Honey from Argentina, Brazil, India, and Vietnam Injures U.S. Industry, Says USITC

May 11, 2022

News Release 22-058

Inv. No. 731-TA-1560-1562 and 731-TA-1564 (Final)

Contact: Jennifer Andberg, 202-205-1819

Raw Honey from Argentina, Brazil, India, and Vietnam Injures U.S. Industry, Says USITC

The United States International Trade Commission (USITC) today determined that a U.S. industry is materially injured by reason of imports of raw honey from Argentina, Brazil, India, and Vietnam that the U.S. Department of Commerce (Commerce) has determined are sold in the United States at less

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Chair Jason E. Kearns, Vice Chair Randolph J. Stayin, and Commissioners David S. Johanson, Rhonda K. Schmidlein, and Amy A. Karpel voted in the affirmative.

As a result of the Commission's affirmative determinations, Commerce will issue antidumping duty orders on imports of this product from Argentina, Brazil, India, and Vietnam.

The Commission made a negative critical circumstances finding with regard to imports of this product from Argentina. The Commission made an affirmative critical circumstances finding with regard to imports of this product from Vietnam.

The Commission's public report *Raw Honey from Argentina, Brazil, India, and Vietnam* (Inv. Nos. 731-TA-1560-1562 and 731-TA-1564 (Final), USITC Publication 5327, May 2022) will contain the views of the Commission and information developed during the investigations.

The report will be available by June 20, 2022; when available, it may be accessed on the USITC website at: http://pubapps.usitc.gov/applications/publogs/qry_publication_loglist.asp.

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

Washington, DC 20436

FACTUAL HIGHLIGHTS

Raw Honey from Argentina, Brazil, India, and Vietnam
Investigation Nos.: 731-TA-1560-1562, 1564 (Final)

Product Description: Honey is a sweet, viscous fluid produced from the nectar of plants and flowers which is collected by honeybees, transformed, and combined with substances of their own, and stored and left in honeycombs to mature and ripen. Raw honey is honey as it exists in the beehive or as obtained by extraction, settling and skimming, or straining.

Status of Proceedings:

1. Type of investigation: Final antidumping duty investigations.
2. Petitioners: American Honey Producers Association ("AHPA"), Bruce, South Dakota; and Sioux Honey Association ("SHA"), Sioux City, Iowa.
3. USITC Institution Date: Wednesday, April 21, 2021.
4. USITC Hearing Date: Tuesday, April 12, 2022.
5. USITC Vote Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2022.
6. USITC Notification to Commerce Date: Tuesday, May 31, 2022.

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1. Number of U.S. producers: approximately 30,000 to 60,000.
2. Location of producers' plants: North Dakota, South Dakota, California, Texas, Montana, Florida, Minnesota, and Michigan
3. Production and related workers: 1,360.
4. U.S. producers' U.S. shipments: \$302 million.
5. Apparent U.S. consumption: \$690 million.
6. Ratio of subject imports to apparent U.S. consumption: 42.8 percent.

U.S. Imports in 2020:

1. Subject imports: \$296 million.
2. Nonsubject imports: \$93 million.
3. Leading import sources: Argentina, Brazil, India, Vietnam.

https://www.usitc.gov/press_room/news_release/2022/er051111935.htm

What does this mean for beekeepers?

The decision will be transmitted to the Commerce Department, which will issue antidumping duty orders shortly. In addition, the Commission reached an affirmative critical circumstances determination against Vietnam. This means that U.S. Customs will collect antidumping duties on entries going back an additional 90 days prior to the preliminary antidumping duty determination—from August 28, 2020, forward. This is an important additional finding, and one that the Commission rarely makes.

These results should continue to ensure that the American honey producer gets the fair prices they deserve.

We truly appreciate all of the donations that we have received to cover legal fees.

The good fight isn't over yet, however, and we still need your support.

To donate to the Antidumping Fund, please contact
Cassie Cox: cassie@ahpanet.com
281-900-9740

Or donate on our secure website: <https://www.ahpanet.com/donations-1>

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AHPA App

As AHPA continues to work on behalf of all beekeepers, one of our initiatives is advocating with the FDA in Washington D.C. to update honey labeling guidelines. As part of this effort, we need your help to collect pictures of honey labels from around the United States. Our goal is primarily to find honey that is mislabeled according to current FDA guidelines. Secondly, we need examples of any labels which misrepresent country of origin or are purposefully confusing to consumers so that we can advocate for positive changes and updates.

Search the App Store or Google Play for "AHPA app". We need to collect as many pictures from honey on the store shelf as possible. Please take a few minutes to help collect this data.

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