



February 23, 2025

The following was sent to various policy, law, and decision makers at state and federal levels:

The Colorado State Beekeepers Association (CSBA) urges you to hear the beekeeping industry as we face unprecedented nationwide challenges in honey bee (livestock) health and scientific support that can provide clarity and guidance. Currently, USDA-ARS researchers are processing emergency samples, and we need their work and funding to be protected, as well as the continuation of emergency assistance for honeybees under ELAP. The CSBA represents over 3,000 beekeepers in Colorado – most of which are still experiencing winter and cannot check their colonies yet, but we are hearing reports of significant colony losses in well-maintained apiaries from those that have been able to check. While the industry has developed an economic model in which some losses are expected and replaced each year, continued crisis is unsustainable.

As published in a press release from Project *Apis m.* (Feb 20, 2025), “A nationwide survey of beekeepers has revealed catastrophic honey bee colony losses across the United States, with commercial operations reporting an average loss of 62% between June 2024 and February 2025.” Even more alarming than the 62% loss is the fact that it occurred in less than a year and the survey is being conducted at a time when many hobbyist & sideline beekeepers are still experiencing winter and cannot confirm colony survival or loss. This leaves a large number of colonies in the United States in an unknown status and means there is still work to be done to understand the reach and implications of this recent blow to the industry.

Emergency samples have been collected in recent weeks and those samples are in the possession of the USDA-ARS. The beekeeping industry is waiting for those samples to be analyzed and results published. Beekeepers across the nation are waiting for advice from researchers - including Dr. Jay Evans & Dr. Zachary Lamas at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center as well as many collaborators - on what is causing the critical colony loss numbers & how we can best manage our remaining colonies going forward. Without data-informed management practices as we work to protect remaining colonies and recover from the significant losses, we risk a catastrophic collapse in honey bee colony numbers that would have long-term impact on pollinated crops (from fruits and vegetables in your grocery store to seed production) and food security in the United States. We urge law and policy makers and those that manage federal funding to protect the jobs and work of the researchers and labs that are working on this critical and time-sensitive issue.

It will be essential that beekeepers get the data and guidance from researchers as we move forward from these devastating colony losses. Data-driven management is crucial as we work to understand what has driven these colony losses and how to find a path towards sustainability within the beekeeping industry. As national organizations such as the Project *Apis m.*, the American Beekeeping Federation, the American Honey Producers Association publish data and outreach, please hear our concerns and consider your role in supporting an essential agricultural industry in crisis.

Sincerely,

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