

Apiary Report

Plant Protection Division
Prepared February 2021

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Apiary Inspection

The Apiary Inspection Program is available to beekeepers shipping bees or used bee equipment for the first time to some states. Three beekeepers requested inspection and certification for interstate shipment of honey bee colonies and equipment in 2020. This fee-supported inspection service will continue to be offered in 2021.

National Honey Bee Health Survey

For the 2020 National Honey Bee Health Survey, the longitudinal sampling of five apiaries continued along with summer sampling in July and August. A total of 24 samples were still collected per state. Bee bread samples from broodnest combs were collected from the longitudinal apiaries in both spring and fall sampling. Some of the same beekeeping outfits were sampled longitudinally a second season in 2020. This gave data over two beekeeping seasons.



Figure 1. An MDA inspector sampling a comb.

Although the three target organisms of the National Honey Bee Health Survey are not known to occur in the United States, they could become serious pests if they arrive in the country.

- *Tropilaelaps* spp. – A honey bee brood parasitic mite native to Asia.
- *Apis cerana* – An Asian honey bee that is a host for several Asian honey bee parasitic mites.
- Slow Bee Paralysis Virus (SBPV) – A virus capable of killing entire honey bee colonies.

A total of 10 apiaries were sampled in May and June. All the 14 remaining samples were collected in September and October making a busy fall sampling season.

American Foulbrood was found in two sampled apiaries in the fall sampling period. This serious bacterial disease requires aggressive management by the beekeeper to mitigate since it is very easily spread by common beekeeping practices and often kills colonies. All colonies appeared generally healthy in the early sampling, but some damage from varroa parasitism was seen in some of the later sampled apiaries. In the longitudinal apiaries, nearly all the spring sampled colonies were still alive to be sampled again in the fall.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and shipping disruptions the live bee samples were frozen and later subsampled and the samples shipped frozen on dry ice to the USDA lab in Maryland later in the summer and fall. Also because of the logistical challenges, none of the sample results were available at the time of this report.

Outreach

A virtual presentation was given to the Southeast Minnesota Beekeepers in June. Covered topics included a synopsis of the National Honey Bee Health Survey to date, managing honey bee pests found in Minnesota, maintaining strong colonies, using disease resistant stock, and raising queens from colonies that also have good beekeeping traits. A presentation to the North Central Beekeepers was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figure 2. An MDA Inspector surveying a bee comb for the National Honey Bee Health Survey.

For More Information

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