e-Buzz

A monthly publication of the American Beekeeping Federation

July 2023

Vice President's Message

Dear Members,

We concluded our trip to Washington DC late Thursday, June 22, with Elizabeth Hill facilitating direct in person and zoom meetings with 11 different individuals and departments within the USDA.

The good news is that ARS and A.P.H.I.S. are taking the tropilaelaps mite threat seriously. Dr. Ramsey has received more funding to study this terminator level parasite at its current home versus when it arrives here in the US.

Continued pressure to open the Canadian border to US packages is one of our better defenses as it could reduce imports from south of the equator.

Rep. Kelly Armstrong has a bill called the HIVE act. Yes, it's an acronym, to get FDA to legally define honey so we have a standing against manufactured honey - which is now a real thing. These manufacturers want to use the good name of honey to sell this synthetic concoction.

This is a big deal, as it will aid in a race to the bottom on honey pricing for us as producers.

We are working on letters which we will ask you to download, put into your own words (please omit your favorite swear words!) and then forward to your congressional leaders in support of this bill and other important issues.

Here's an interesting observation: An intern was scrambling to answer the phone as we entered the office of a congressman when he pulled up short and let it ring. He said that number was flagged due to foul and abusive language used by the caller to the office. Note to self: don't call and lobby when your fired up. They will tag you.

All in all, it was a good visit. Fran Boyd and President Dan Winter did a great job covering the issues. Good questions were asked of us and we left each session having learned a bit better how Washington works, and how it fails to work. We specifically asked for $9M to prepare against the arrival of the tropilaelaps mite. This is a huge ask, as funding to most programs has or will be cut by three percent. ARS labs so far are being funded at last year's budgeted levels, which is a win. Our purpose is to have the American Beekeeping Federation front and center, of issues affecting your livelihood or passion. Thank you for your support and interest in making it work.

Jay Miller
Vice President

Legislative Updates

HIVE Act

Congress Armstrong (R-ND) introduced the HIVE Act (HR 4764) earlier this month. The HIVE Act would:

- Require the Food and Drug Administration to establish a standard of identity for honey and report to Congress on enforcement actions taken against adulterated and/or misbranded honey. Currently, there is no standard definition of honey.
- Update the existing US Department of Agriculture country of origin requirements to reorganize labeling to show countries of origin listed in order of predominance (this change is a consumer-familiar update that reflects existing ingredient labeling standards and would help consumers discern where honey originated).

Background:

- Honey is a food product that is frequently adulterated or misbranded.
- As noted by the FDA, some companies mix cheaper sweeteners with authentic honey to lower the cost of production and then sell that product to consumers as “pure honey”. Additionally, imports from non-authentic origins, like China, continue to be transshipped through other countries and then falsely sold as honey. While imports have increased, U.S. honey production has steadily declined.
- Despite repeated pressure from both Congress and stakeholders, the FDA has refused to establish a binding standard of identity for honey. This inaction has allowed adulterated product to be misleadingly sold to consumers and has jeopardized the well-being of domestic honey producers.

Clearly defining and labeling honey is essential to:

- Mitigating the import of Chinese-adulterated and transshipped product;
- Ensuring the integrity of the marketplace; and
- Protecting domestic honey producers and the more than $15 billion worth of US crops pollinated by honeybees each year.

We have been working very closely with his staff for some time on the legislation prior to its introduction. Below is a letter concerning the HIVE Act. It was sent to ALL House Ag staff beyond the initially targeted offices requesting members of Congress (both Democrat and Republican) join Congressman Armstrong in supporting the HIVE Act and add their names as co-sponsors of the legislation.

We encourage all ABF members to contact the agriculture staff in their individual congressman's office and urge them to reach out Congressman Armstrong's office and join as a co-sponsor to the HIVE ACT (HR 4764). All honey producers both large and small should be actively supporting this legislation.

Below is the 7/20/23 press release.

KELLY ARMSTRONG

Serving the People of North Dakota

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Thursday, July 20, 2023

Contact: conner.swanson@mail.house.gov

Armstrong Introduces Legislation to Create a Standard of Identity for Honey and Update Labeling Requirements

WASHINGTON –Today, Congressman Kelly Armstrong (R-ND) introduced H.R. 4764, the Honey Identification Verification and Enforcement (HIVE) Act, which would require the creation of a standard of identity for honey and update the labeling requirements for honey. North Dakota is the No.1 honey state, producing approximately $31.2 million pounds in 2022.

"North Dakota produces more honey than any other state. Yet, there is no standard definition of honey. This puts American producers at a disadvantage against disingenuous or fraudulent "honey" imports. The HIVE Act will provide consumers confidence that when they buy a product labeled as honey, it's actually honey. These updates are commonsense and long overdue," said Congressman Armstrong.

"The HIVE Act is a good step in the right direction to protect against the influx of diluted, adulterated and misbranded honey imports," said North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring. "Consumers will be informed about the honey they buy and our domestic beekeeping industry will have a level playing field against overseas companies."

The HIVE Act would:

- Require 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 US Department of Agriculture 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.

Full text of the bill can be found here.

THUD Bill

The Senate THUD Bill mentions Pollinator Friendly Practices. Included in Senate THUD Appropriations Bill, Page 47, Lines 7-10: *"$3,000,000 shall be to carry out the Pollinator-Friendly Practices on Roadsides and Highway Rights-of-Way Program under section 332 of title 23, United States Code;"*

Although we are a long way from any final appropriations bills reaching the President's desk, we want to keep ABF membership updated.

State Delegates Updates

Our latest State Delegates call was held on July 11 and was a huge success as we had the greatest number of delegates so far. Yeah! With over 35 delegates on the call, we met our goal set at our ABF .2023 Conference and Tradeshow. We meet the second Tuesday every other month. The last two meetings in 2023 will be September 12 and November 14.

Our calls feature guest speakers, an open forum for discussion on what ABF is doing for beekeepers and our industry, as well as delegates sharing what is going on in their states. Garett Slater was our guest speaker on the July call and reviewed the work being done by the Research Committee. He reviewed the Practical Bee Award that is given out each year at the ABF Conference and Tradeshow. This will be the 3rd Practical Bee Award. We hope this award can be used to: 1) Connect beekeepers to the national organization, 2) Fund research and education requirements for the master beekeeping program, and 3) Use their ideas/innovations to help other beekeepers. We are looking to fund four individuals $500 that have developed a practical beekeeping practice, have a practical beekeeping idea OR needs funding as part of a master beekeeping program. Contact Garett Slater at garett.p.slater@gmail.com for the application or questions. Deadline for application is October 1, 2023.

Regional Associations

The U.S. is fortunate to have three regional organizations that meet annually. This allows beekeepers across the states to attend a regional conference close to home as they move the conference around to different member state in their region. If you'd like to participate in educational sessions, apiary experience, children's program and a honey show, you should register to attend a regional conference.

Eastern Apicultural Society (EAS)

EAS EASTERN APICULTURAL SOCIETY

Eastern Apicultural Society (EAS) will be July 31 – August 4, 2023 in Amherst, MA at the University of Massachusetts. Some of their main speakers are Dr's. Samuel Ramsey, Judy Wu-Smart, Cameron Jack, Tammy Horn-Potter, Tom Seeley along with Paul Kelly and many others. Their format will be the same as past years with a short course (Mon – Wed) and the main course (Wed thru Fri). EAS also sponsors a Master Beekeeping Program, Awards and Scholarships. Check out their website for all the details: https://easternapiculture.org/conference

Western Apicultural Society (WAS)

Western Apicultural Society (WAS) will be back in full swing for their conference which will be held in Calgary, Canada September 29 – October 1, 2023. Topics will include management best practices, hive health, queen rearing, urban beekeeping, over-wintering and much more. See their website for more details: https://www.westernapiculturalsociety.org/2023conference

State Events

If you have a state event and would like to share it with ABF members, please send it to Debbie Seib at seibshoosierhoney@yahoo.com. Here are some upcoming state events:

August 18-19 Florida Summer Bee College

August 19 New Mexico Beekeepers Association Summer Conference

August 25-26 Louisiana Beekeepers Association Convention

Sept 15-16 Alabama Beekeepers Association Fall Conference

Sept 21-23 Georgia Beekeepers Association's Fall Conference

October 7-8 Washington State Beekeepers Association

October 27-28 The Beekeepers of Indiana Fall Conference and Workshops

October 27-28 Ohio State Beekeepers Conference

November 2-4 Wisconsin Honey Producers Association Fall Convention

If you would like more information about ABF State Delegates Assembly or about state sponsorships, contact Debbie Seib at seibshoosierhoney@yahoo.com. If you are a State Delegate and would like ABF information to share at your event, send an email including estimated numbers to abfnet.org@gmail.com. Please give us three weeks notice.

Regards,

Debbie Seib, Chair
ABF State Delegates Assembly

ABF 2024 Conference and Trade Show

Exciting Conference News...

Our conference will begin on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 with a dinner on Tuesday evening. We will show videos of commercial beekeepers in their apiaries.
We have reserved a block of rooms at the New Orleans Marriott for a discounted rate of $169 a night (plus applicable tax and fees). The hotel is located on 555 Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130.

There are several tours that have been arranged for Monday, January 8, 2024 at a special rate. For more information, check out our website at https://www.abfnet.org/mpage/2024-ABF-Conference-Frame

We have finalized our agenda and posted it on our website. It will be subject to change as our speakers confirm or decline. 90% of the invited speakers have confirmed.

Thursday, we'll be going to the House of Blues for fun and socializing. It will include a 4-piece band, a magician, face painter, and revelers/greeters. We'll be able to walk to the restaurant as it's only a block away.

Online registration will open this week with early bird registration rates through October 31, 2023. Pre-registration will close on December 26, 2023. Full conference registration will include a Tuesday night "Dinner and a Show" and Wednesday night "Dinner and Ice-cream Social". Watch our website for the schedule, more information, and a link to the registration page.

Registration	Early Bird Rates July 5 - October 31, 2023		Regular Rates Nov 1 - Dec 26, 2023		On-Site Rates	
	Member	Non-Member	Member	Non-Member	Member	Non-Member
Individual Registrants Full Conference	$245.00	$305.00	$295.00	$355.00	$345.00	$405.00
Individual Registrants Day Rate	$150.00	$190.00	$175.00	$215.00	$200.00	$240.00
Student and Educator	$60.00					

Note:
* 10 percent discount for active military and first responders

We have confirmed 12 vendors already. If you'd like to Exhibit or Sponsor, please send an email to Regina Robuck at partnershiprelations@abfnet.org.

For all others questions, send an email to Debbie Seib at abfnet.org@gmail.com.

Honey Queen Buzz

July begins the busiest promotional season for your American Honey Queen and Princess, as they begin crisscrossing the nation for fairs, festivals, farmers' markets, and more!

Honey and beekeeping festivals were a big part of July. Selena participated in the Michigan Honey Festival outside Lansing, speaking to attendees about honey and its versatile properties, how bees make it, and how the beekeeper cares for and shepherds this process to the consumer. It was our second visit to this event, and we are excited to continue our partnership with this organization! Allison participated in a Beekeeper Fun Day and Knowledge Fest with the Washington State Beekeepers Association. The event centered around teaching the public about beekeeping, and she highlighted the many ways we can use honey. In advance of her visit, Allison participated in media interviews remotely. Consider this for your event; the Queen or Princess can participate in phone or virtual platform interviews to promote your event prior to her arrival!

County Fairs were also a feature this month, with Allison attending the Jackson County Fair in Iowa giving presentations to youth groups about the industry. Selena ventured to New Jersey for the Warren County Farmers Fair, working with the Northwest New Jersey Beekeepers Association at their exhibit, participating in hive demonstrations and cooking with honey demonstrations.

The month wrapped up with some local media interviews, and Allison also presented virtually to the Big Island Beekeepers Association in Hawaii. We know that many organizations continue to offer online programming to their members, and the Queen and Princess are delighted to spend time with and speak about effective promotion ideas, the American Honey Queen Program, and their work as our spokespersons this year.

Over the next several months, Selena and Allison will also promote the application process for the American Honey Queen and Princess positions. Full application packets will be sent to current state Honey Queens in early August. For women in states without active programs, the preliminary application period has opened and is available through www.abfnet.org. The American Honey Queen Committee is eager to welcome an exciting pool of applicants to the convention in New Orleans!

We continue to take your promotional requests for the fall months, so please contact me at honeyqueen99@hotmail.com or 414.545.5514 to schedule a presentation or promotion with Selena and Allison. Happy promoting!

Practical Bee Award

Hey all! My name is Garett Slater and I am the chair of the ABF Research Committee. We are launching our 3rd Practical Bee Award. However, this is the first time we are reaching out to master beekeeping programs. We hope this award can be used to:

1. Connect beekeepers to the national organization
2. Funding research and education requirements for the master beekeeping program, and
3. Use their ideas/innovations to help other beekeepers

This if the first year using this format so we are hoping to get feedback on improvements for the future. I would really like this award to fit the needs of master beekeeping programs across the country, so any thoughts/comments are welcome.

For beekeepers, the application is simple (see below). We are looking to fund $500 to individuals that have developed a practical beekeeping practice, have a practical beekeeping idea OR needs funding as part of a master beekeeping program.

We're offering beekeepers the chance to attend virtual meetings from the comfort of one's own home using a computer or mobile device. Speakers include university researchers and extension specialists from across the SE US as well as USDA ARS researchers. Each event will bring participants up to date on timely beekeeping topics with time for Q & A included.

All are welcome!! Join us for this free event!!

- July 25: Organic beekeeping, *with R. Underwood (PSU)*
- August 29: Genetic diversity of *Varroa destructor* in the US, *with J. Rangel (TAMU)*
- Sept. 26: The science of using pollen substitutes, *with J. Ellis (UFL)*

Last Tuesday of the month

6:30 – 7:30 pm Central Time

Watch via Zoom Webinar

https://auburn.zoom.us/j/904522838

or Facebook Live: https://www.facebook.com/LawrenceCountyextension/

Questions? Email Allyson Shabel ams0137@aces.edu

Our institutions are equal opportunity educators and employers. Everyone is welcome! Please let us know if you have accessibility needs.

Applications are due October 1, 2023.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Cheers,

Garrett Slater

The Alabama Extension System, in cooperation with Extension Systems and University Bee Labs across the SE United States, hosts a monthly series called the At Home Beekeeping Series on the last Tuesday of each month from 6:30-7:30 PM CST. This FREE VIRTUAL SERIES highlights new research and best beekeeping practices from bee labs in the SE US. It is open to everyone!

There are two ways to join these free webinars::

Via Zoom (no registration necessary): https://auburn.zoom.us/j/904522838

Via Facebook Live: https://www.facebook.com/LawrenceCountyextension

If you miss the live event, you can find the recorded video on their Facebook page. It will only be posted for two weeks, so don't delay. Learn more about this free VIRTUAL series, including a list of speakers and topics here.