



American Honey Producers Association

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February 15, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins,

The American Honey Producers Association is submitting these 33 letters on behalf of our members and U.S. beekeepers. The attached letters from beekeepers who have recently lost most of their honey bee colonies (livestock) highlight the impact on them, their employees, and their families.

Please review these letters which outline the losses faced by commercial beekeepers, who on average have suffered an estimated 65% loss of their colonies since June of 2024. Each colony is valued at \$200-\$250 and according to the NASS Honey Report, generated an average income of \$236 per colony in 2023. Our industry losses will be greater than 1.2 million colonies which translates to more than \$525 million, in dead colonies and subsequent lost income in 2025 alone.

Before CCD, annual losses were under 15% on average, but since 2011, commercial beekeepers have lost an average of 40.3% of their colonies each year (<https://apiaryinspectors.org/US-beekeeping-survey>). Our industry has had an estimated loss of between 1-1.6 million colonies in the past 9 months alone, and it cannot rebuild all those colonies in one season. It takes each operation 2-3 years of low losses to recover from such a significant loss if they can even afford to rebuild. These operations are often family farming businesses, many of which span second or third generations as honey or pollination farms. Beekeepers will require substantial support to recover from these losses.

Farming, including the beekeeping industry, is part of what built this great nation. A healthy and profitable beekeeping and pollination industry is crucial to the health of our food supply, as honeybees play a vital role in pollinating more than 130 crops. I like to say that the beekeeping and pollination industry leaves a bigger footprint on agriculture than our shoe size. Our \$700 million industry holds a disproportionate yet crucial place in the \$60 billion specialty crop sector of agriculture. Consider the impact on the other agricultural sectors that are at risk if our industry cannot rebuild or collapses? Given the situation, it is crucial that the USDA provides

immediate disaster relief funds to help beekeepers recover. Additionally, there is a need for comprehensive USDA research into honeybee health to understand and address the causes of these losses, which is essential for the long-term sustainability of the beekeeping industry.

We request a meeting, next week, if possible, to discuss both short and long-term resources needed for the beekeeping industry. This includes exploring ways to enhance support for beekeepers beyond current programs, such as an indemnity support program.

Additionally, we would like to discuss methods to streamline the payout system for the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP), making it more efficient and user-friendly, ensuring timely financial assistance for beekeepers.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. We look forward to the opportunity to meet and discuss how to support the beekeeping industry and ensure the health of our nation's honey bee populations.

Sincerely,



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