

2009 4-H Honey Bee Essay Contest

Sponsored by The Foundation of the Preservation of Honey Bees, Inc.

Each year the Foundation sponsors an essay writing contest for active (fees paid) members of 4-H clubs across the country. There are cash prizes for the national winners: 1st Place - \$750.00; 2nd Place - \$500.00; 3rd Place - \$250.00. National and state winners receive a book about honey bees, beekeeping, or honey.

Topic – “**The Dance Language of Bees**” Honey bees possess the ability to communicate the distance and direction of resources to their nest-mates. They employ a symbolic dance language in which the position of the sun is symbolically represented by gravity, and a trained observer can watch their dances and predict where they are foraging. The use of symbolic language by an insect has made them one of the most studied animals. This year’s essay content invites participants to learn about the honey bee’s dance language, how it was discovered, how it works and how it provides colonies the ability to find and exploit floral resources.

Sources – Karl Von Frisch was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1973 for his work with insect communication. His classic text is “The Dance Language and Orientation of Bees,” (1967), Harvard University Press. There are dissenters to Von Frisch’s findings. See “Anatomy of a Controversy: The Question of a ‘Language’ Among Bees,” (1990), Columbia University Press. The results of scout bees leading nest-mates back to a new food source can be demonstrated easily by a beekeeper.

Scope of Research – This essential judging criterion accounts for 40% of the score. The number of sources, the authority of the sources, and the variety of the sources all are evaluated. Personal interviews with beekeepers and others familiar with the subject are valued sources of information and should be documented. Sources that are not cited in the end notes should be listed in a “Resources” or “Bibliography” list. **Note that in the US, honey bee is spelled properly as two words, despite what the spell checkers and dictionaries may tell you.**

Contest Rules:

1. Contest is open only to active 4-H Club members. Previous national winners, at any level, are ineligible. Former state winners are eligible to re-enter.
2. Format should be typewritten or computer-generated, double-spaced, 12-point Times or similar (serif) type style, on one side of white paper following standard manuscript format. Write on designated subject only.
All factual statements must be referenced with bibliographical-style endnotes.
The essay must contain 750 to 1,000 words. This does not include the endnotes, the bibliography, references, or essayist’s biographical sketch (which should be on a separate page).
3. Essays will be judged on (a) scope of research – 40%; (b) accuracy – 30%; (c) creativity – 10%; (d) conciseness – 10%; and (e) logical development of the topic – 10%.
4. A brief biographical sketch of the essayist, including date of birth, gender, complete mailing address, and telephone number, must accompany the essay.
5. Individual essays for the State of California should be mailed (“hard copy”) in time to be received on or before February 13, 2009. Address the envelope to: Dr. Eric Mussen, Entomology Department, University of California, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616.