

Proposed California Apiary Research Commission Would Fund Honey Bee Research

Honey bee research would receive a substantial shot in the arm if beekeepers operating in California decide to form the California Apiary Research Commission to support honey bee research and information distribution. If they register to vote by May 30, 2011, and vote approval in July, 2011, beekeepers who operate 51 or more colonies of honey bees, with the intent to produce income, would be required to pay a small assessment on each colony.

Since the fees would be assessed on the 500,000 or so colonies resident in California, as well as the 700,000 or more that are trucked into California from out of state, more than 1,000 beekeepers could be involved.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is doing its best to compile a list of potential voters for the July referendum. The records may be scant, since many beekeepers do not register when they are in California, do not pass through the border stations, and do not submit records to the National Honey Board. CDFA plans to mail registration forms to the beekeepers it can locate, but many potentially eligible voters will be missed.

If you wish to vote in the referendum and doubt that you will be hearing from CDFA, move on to the next pages to see what CDFA has to say about this referendum. The third page of its information is the Beekeeper Registration Form. It has to reach the CDFA office by May 30, 2011.

The commission would be overseen by a seven-member Board of Directors, including an appointed public member. One of the beekeeper directors must reside outside of California. The beekeeper directors would be elected either by "mail balloting" or by "in-person nomination meetings."

To put this in perspective, if the directors decide to assess each colony 50 cents (the assessment cannot exceed \$1.00 for the first five years), and the fee was paid on one million colonies, that means \$500,000 for research, minus a bit for administrative fees. That amount of money would allow the commission to support projects that could not be funded previously due to lack of funds. And, if the referendum is approved, beekeepers would vote every five years whether or not to retain the commission.

Also, at \$0.50 per colony, that would be one-third of one percent, or three one-thousandths, of a \$150 almond rental. Many beekeepers feel that reducing their income from \$150 to \$149.50 is worthwhile when the money is going to support research that should provide useful information for their operations.

If you wish to be involved in the decision making, be sure that you are registered by May 30 to vote in the July referendum.



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE
Karen Ross, Secretary

March 4, 2011

**Register to Vote in the Implementation Referendum for the
Proposed California Apiary Research Commission
(Registration Forms due May 30, 2011)**

To All Eligible Beekeepers:

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is currently conducting a registration process for eligible beekeepers (see definition on Page 2 of this notice) to participate in a referendum to determine if the proposed California Apiary Research Commission shall become operative. This proposed program was enacted into law on January 1, 2011 via the recent passage of AB 1912. However, in order for this proposed program to be implemented, it must also be approved by a super-majority of eligible beekeepers in an implementation referendum, which will be conducted by CDFA during the month of July. Enclosed with this cover letter are a registration form and a postage-paid, return envelope. All eligible beekeepers must register and provide proof of eligibility in order to vote in this referendum. No action is required if you do not meet the qualifications of an eligible beekeeper as defined.

Overview of Proposed California Apiary Research Commission:

The California Apiary Research Commission Law (reference Chapter 28 of Part 2 of Division 22 of the California Food and Agricultural Code) can be accessed at:

<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt/ordslaws.html>.

- The Commission would be authorized to carry out programs of education, market analyses, and research relating to honeybees and the beekeeping industry.
- The operations of the Commission would be directed by a seven-member board of directors consisting of six elected beekeepers and one appointed public member. Beekeeper representation is allocated to both California beekeepers and beekeepers whose principle residence is outside of the state but who bring bees into California for commercial purposes.
- The day to day operations of the Commission would be carried out by a staff to be hired or contracted with by the Commission.
- The Commission would be funded by a mandatory assessment levied annually on all bee colonies located in California on March 1 of each year. The rate of this assessment would be set annually by the Commission's elected board of directors at any level at or below the maximum allowable rate, which is one dollar (\$1.00) per colony. Assessments would be paid directly to the California Apiary Research Commission as directed by the Commission
- Beekeepers with 50 colonies or less would be exempt from paying the assessment.
- CDFA would conduct a public hearing every fifth year to determine if the proposed Commission should continue in operation.

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Apiary Research Commission
Registration Process
March 4, 2011
Page Two

Voter Registration Eligibility:

The Commission Law defines an eligible beekeeper as an individual beekeeper or business who owns and/or operates more than 50 colonies in California with intent to earn income. If you meet the qualifications of an eligible beekeeper as defined, please complete all sections of the enclosed registration form and attach a copy of one of the following documents to verify your eligibility:

- Registration documentation from a California county agricultural commissioner's office;
- Entrance documentation provided by a California border protection station;
- Documentation that pollination services were provided to a California farming operation, such as a contract, invoice, or the contact information (name and phone number) of the farming entity where your bees were operating.

Completed registration forms and supporting documentation may be submitted using the enclosed return envelope (no postage required) or mailed to the following address:

CDFA - Marketing Branch
560 J Street, Suite 170A
Sacramento, CA 95814-2342

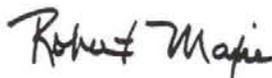
Eligible beekeepers who fail to register during this process will not be sent a referendum ballot. However, failure to register will not exempt eligible beekeepers from paying assessments to the Commission should it be implemented. All information provided to CDFA during the registration process will be kept confidential.

Registration Period:

Registration forms and accompanying verification must be postmarked or otherwise received by this office no later than **May 30, 2011**. In order for your registration materials to be accepted by CDFA, all applicable portions of the form must be completed and proper documentation must be submitted. Incomplete or unsigned registration forms will be considered invalid and will not be included in the final list of beekeepers eligible to vote in the implementation referendum.

After the registration period has ended, all registered beekeepers will be provided with additional instructions and a ballot to vote in the upcoming implementation referendum for the proposed California Apiary Research Commission. If you have any questions about this registration process or the proposed Commission, please contact Joe Monson with the Marketing Branch at 916-341-6005.

Sincerely,



Robert Maxie, Chief
Marketing Branch

Enclosures

BEEKEEPER REGISTRATION FORM PROPOSED CALIFORNIA APIARY RESEARCH COMMISSION

MUST BE RETURNED (POSTMARKED) BY MAY 30, 2011 IN ORDER TO VOTE IN THE UPCOMING IMPLEMENTATION REFERENDUM REGARDING THE PROPOSED COMMISSION

Instructions

- Refer to accompanying letter for important background information.
- In order to register to vote in the implementation referendum for the proposed California Apiary Research Commission, you must be an eligible beekeeper as defined below:
An eligible beekeeper means an individual beekeeper or business who owns and/or operates more than 50 colonies in California with intent to earn income. (Please note this definition includes both beekeepers who reside in California and beekeepers whose principle residence is outside of the state but who bring bees into California for commercial purposes)
- Complete the (1) Beekeeper Information, (2) Volume Information, (3) Eligibility Verification, and (4) Certification sections below.
- Provide a copy of appropriate documentation to verify eligibility.
- Return registration form and appropriate documentation by May 30, 2011 using the self-addressed envelop (if provided) or by mailing it to:

 CDFA - Marketing Branch
 560 J Street, Suite 170A
 Sacramento, CA 95814-2342
- Please complete a separate registration form for each qualified legal beekeeping entity you operate.

Section 1: Beekeeper Information	
Name (print clearly):	Name of Business Operation (if applicable):
Mailing Address, City, State & Zip (primary residence):	
Telephone Number:	Email Address (optional):

Section 2: Volume Information
Please indicate the number of bee colonies you or your firm operated in California on March 1, 2011 (must be more than 50 colonies):
I/my firm operated _____ bee colonies in California on March 1, 2011.

Section 3: Eligibility Verification
Please check <u>one</u> box below to indicate which of the following documents you are providing with this form to verify your eligibility (adequate documentation must be included in order to register to vote in the upcoming referendum):
<input type="checkbox"/> I am providing registration documentation from a California county agricultural commissioner's office.
<input type="checkbox"/> I am providing entrance documentation provided by a California border protection station.
<input type="checkbox"/> I am providing documentation that pollination services were provided to a California farming operation, such as a contract, invoice, or the contact information (name and phone number) of the farming entity where your bees were operating.

Section 4: Certification <i>[By signing below, I certify that I meet the qualifications of an eligible beekeeper as defined above and that the information provided on this form and attached documentation is correct to the best of my knowledge]</i>	
Date:	Signature: 

Registration forms without a signature are invalid and will not be included on the official list used to mail out ballots for the implementation referendum. For more information, please contact the CDFA Marketing Branch at (916) 341-6005.