

Enhancing the Tech Team Program for the Commercial Beekeeping Industry – Oregon Tech Transfer Team

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Objectives:

- Create a Tech Transfer Team that will regularly sample Oregon Commercial Beekeepers hives throughout the state, process the lab results promptly and advise beekeepers on suggested best management practices for various situations, while also providing data that will enhance the decision making process. Sample analysis will be provided to national databases as well.

Background and Discussion:

The Bee Informed Partnership (BIP), with funding from the Almond Board of California, Project Apis mellifera (PAm) and beekeepers, is establishing a Tech Transfer Team in the Pacific North West (PNW). This tech team is based on a pilot team started in Northern California using USDA-NIFA grant funding.

Tech Transfer Teams are technical experts who interact with groups such as commercial queen breeders and beekeepers. They monitor disease and parasite management and provide analyses so that beekeepers can make science-based decisions on hive and bee pest and disease status. This helps to determine if there is a need to act, and what those actions should be. For example, Tech Transfer Teams play a key role in Varroa mite treatment and control which is critical to any bee health protocol. They have also played a part in extending and evaluating Varroa- and pest-resistant honey bee germplasm to

beekeepers. In 2012/13, commercial beekeepers working with these teams experienced 17% overwintering loss of hives vs. average commercial beekeeper hive losses of 31%.

The concept of Tech Transfer Teams has received considerable traction in the commercial beekeeping community and, using various private and public funding, has expanded to include other teams serving large scale migratory beekeepers in the mid-west, east coast based migratory beekeepers who also pollinate almonds, and queen producers in California, Hawaii, and Georgia. As a result, the Bee Informed team has developed and tested comprehensive hive assessment and sample collection protocols; rapid, efficient, and economic disease diagnostic capabilities; and beekeeper friendly report generation. The establishment of a Pacific North West (PNW) tech team will permit the servicing another important beekeeping demographic – commercial beekeepers who not only pollinate fruit, nut, and oil seed crops, but also pollinate vegetable crops grown for seed production. BIP does not have funding from the USDSA-NIFA grant for this team; however, they are willing to cover the cost of all kits, analysis and reporting during the first year of the team's implementation (2014-2015).

Project Cooperators and Personnel: Dennis vanEngelsdorp, University of Maryland and Bee Informed Partnership

For More Details, Visit

- Poster location 6, Exhibit Hall A + B during the Almond Conference; or on the web (after January 2015) at Almonds.com/ResearchDatabase
- 2013-2014 Annual Reports CD (13-POLL5-Spivak); or on the web (after January 2015) at Almonds.com/ResearchDatabase
- Related projects: 14-POLL7-Sheppard/Cobey; 13-POLL5 -Spivak