Rolling the dice on disaster? Report honey bee colonies to FSA by Jan. 2

Few individuals so far have reported their honey bee colonies to FSA, a necessary first step to ensure eligibility for participation in FSA risk management programs.

“I would surely hate for this easy step to be missed, then someone encounter a disaster next year when they may need the benefit of our disaster program (ELAP) for hive or colony loss – and not be eligible due to skipping this reporting process,” said Lindsey New, FSA executive director for Pulaski and McCreary counties.

The FSA’s Risk Management Agency offers the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) for risk management.

The program requires advance filing of hive count Form FSA-578 for those enrolled in ELAP for the current year or for those who want to be eligible for ELAP in case of an eligible disaster-related loss. The deadline is Jan. 2 to file this report with your local FSA office.

Also report within 30 days if colonies of bees are acquired, brought into, or removed from the county.

FSA Form 578 online: pdffiller.com/jsfiller-desk10/?projectId=365494387&expId=5990&expBranch=2#5ca77b3f300a37da3e4e498d70458c82

Berea College First Lady Laurie Roelofs and children from the Berea Child Development Lab release 36 monarch butterflies into the world. With support from Sustainable Berea and University of Kansas-based Monarch Watch, Roelofs is continuing work she began as a kindergarten teacher in Haverford, Pennsylvania, more than 15 years ago. (Berea College photo)

Berea College has become the 85th affiliate of the Bee Campus USA program, recognized for its efforts to create sustainable habitats for pollinators.

Berea College First Lady Laurie Roelofs, chair of the school’s Bee Campus USA Committee, said the idea is to be intentional about pollination.

“If we are being very determined about the kind of plants that we have, the native plants, the sources of food for them, then we are supplying more of what bees need,” Roelofs said.

While this designation pertains to bees, Roelofs has also raised monarch butterflies for more than two decades. She noted butterfly-based pollination can not be overlooked. “We mostly talk about honey bees, but all the other kinds of bees are also pollinators, as our most butterflies,” Roelofs said.

The Bee Campus USA program is an initiative of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. It’s described as a non-profit with a mission to galvanize communities and campuses to sustain pollinators by providing them with healthy habitats rich in native plants and free of pesticides.

Berea College’s First Lady helps school become nation’s 85th Bee Campus USA

Dadant names new Frankfort manager

Dadan and Sons Bee Supply has named Natasha Cummins manager of the company’s Frankfort office/warehouse. Cummins is the first female manager in the Dadant organization.

(Dunne Trammel)
WINTER EVENTS

- **Jan. 8-11.** American Beekeeping Federation, Schaumburg, Illinois. All skill levels, family activities, coronation of 2020 Honey Queen and Princess, American Honey Show. [https://abfconference.com/](https://abfconference.com/)

- **Jan. 18.** Eastern Kentucky Winter Bee School, Perry County High School, Hazard. **Must pre-register by Jan. 8** for lower $20 per adult registration cost; $25 at door. Mail pre-registration to Perry County Cooperative Extension Office, 933 Perry Park Road, Hazard, KY 41701. 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. EST. Keynote speaker: **Clare Rittschof, Ph.D.,** University of Kentucky entomologist. Topic: Robber bees. Lunch included, family rates available, vendors present. Door prizes. Kentucky State University’s John Haley will have the autoclave available to sterilize beekeeping equipment. Sponsored by **Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky-Perry County.**

  Questions about registration or event cancellation: Charles May, (606) 436-2044 or cmay@uky.edu.

- **Jan. 18.** Greenup County Beginning Beekeeper School. 9 a.m.-noon EST. Greenup County Extension Office, 35 Wurtland Ave., Wurtland. Free, but pre-register. Includes lunch of soup beans and cornbread.

  **Pre-register:** Linda Hieneman, linda.hieneman@uky.edu. (606) 836-0187.

- **Jan. 25.** Kentucky Queen Bee Breeders Association Inc. general meeting. Kentucky State University research farm, 1525 Mills Lane, Frankfort. Registration 8 a.m. EST, program begins at 9 a.m. **Larry Connor, Ph.D.,** will discuss sustainable sideline queen rearing and management. Member attendees receive a signed copy of Dr. Connor’s book. Memberships available at door.

  KQBBA c/o Dorothy Morgan, 544 West Farm Road, Nancy, KY 42544, (606) 871-7300, or lavenderlane farms@gmail.com.

- **Jan. 25.** Northeast Kentucky Boyd County Bee School. Franks Building, Boyd County Fairgrounds, 1758 Addington Dr., Ashland. $5 members, $10 non-members. Registration 8 a.m. EST. Program ends 3 p.m.

  **Pre-register:** Boyd County Extension Office, (606) 739.5184.

- **Jan. 28.** Lake Cumberland Beginner Beekeepers School. First of five classes, followed by Class 2 Feb. 11, Class 3 Feb. 25, Class 4 March 24, and Class 5 April 28.

  Beth Wilson: beth.wilson@uky.edu.

CHECK FOR UPDATES: www.kyagr.com

FEBRUARY

- **Feb. 1.** South Central Kentucky Bee School. Speaker: Kevin Hale. Allen County Scottsville High School Science Wing, 1545 Bowling Green Road (Veterans Highway), Scottsville. Doors open 7:30 a.m. CST for the 8:30 a.m. -3 p.m. event. **Allen County-Scottsville Arts Council** art show & sale, free for the public, with the theme of pollinators, flowers, and bees. Event hosted by **Allen County Beekeepers Association Inc.**

  Allen County B.A. president Clifford Oliver: (270) 237-5245.

- **Feb. 7-8.** Beekeeping workshops and banquet, Eastern Missouri Beekeepers, St. Louis. See story, next page. info@easternmobeekeepers.com.

- **Feb. 8.** Pre-register by **Feb. 4** for Southeastern Kentucky Bee School. Speaker: Tammy Horn Potter, Kentucky State Apiarist and USDA researcher. McCreary Central High School, Stearns. Registration 8 a.m. EST, opening session 9 a.m., classes start 10 a.m., closing session 3:15 p.m. $20 pre-registered attendees, $25 single walk-ups, $30 pre-registered couples, $40 couples at the door. Under-18 free. Lunch and refreshments included. Vendors present.

  Contact Jessica Musgrove, 606-376-2524, or jessica.musgrove@uky.edu. McCreary Co. Ext. Ofc, PO Box 278, 141 College St, Whitley City, KY 42653. A PDF with the program: mccreary.ca.uky.edu/sites/mccreary.ca.uky.edu/files/bee_school_2018_program_1.pdf.

- **Feb. 15.** Eastern Bluegrass Extension Bee School. Clark County Cooperative Extension Service, 1400 Fortune Drive, Winchester. Beginners session 9 a.m. to noon EST. A advanced session 1-4 p.m. $15 to attend one or both sessions. Pre-registration preferred. Lunch included in registration. Coordinated by **Clark, Estill, Madison, Powell, and Nicholas County extension services.**

  David Davis, Clark County ANR Extension Agent: david.davis@uky.edu. Clark County Extension Service, (859) 744-4682.

- **Feb. 29.** 11th Annual Northeastern Kentucky Beekeeping School. Keynote Speaker: Kamon Reynolds. Maysville Community and Technical College, 1755 U.S. Hwy 68, Maysville. 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. EST. $25 for pre-registration, $30 walk-in, $750 for 12 and under. Price includes access to up to four classes of the 20 held, access to vendors, ticket for door prizes, and a Fazoli’s hot lunch. Hosted by the **Licking River Beekeepers Association.**

  Pre-register: Bob Fore, loribob10@hotmail.com or (606) 247-5817. Follow Licking River Beekeepers on Facebook for latest information.

See EVENTS, next page
Eastern Missouri Beekeepers Association (EMBA) will offer a full day of professional beekeeping instruction and honey bee health research presentations for beginners and experienced beekeepers on Saturday, Feb. 8, 2020, at Maritz in Fenton, Missouri.

Registrants are encouraged to attend the Annual EMBA St. Louis Beekeepers Mardi Gras banquet the evening before the workshop on Friday, Feb. 7, also at Maritz.

Leading beekeeping educators, scientists and authors from the University of Minnesota Bee Lab, the University of Georgia Honey Bee Program, Bee Culture magazine, and Michigan State University will be among visiting faculty and experts leading workshops.

Faculty will include Jennifer A. Berry, Apicultural Research Professional and Lab Manager, University of Georgia Honey Bee Program and Kim Flottum, author and Bee Culture magazine senior editor emeritus.

The course for experienced beekeepers will be tailored toward hobbyist, sideliners, and commercial beekeepers, and will place special emphasis on hive management and improving honey bee health.

The beginner beekeeping course is intended for novice beekeepers and those with no prior beekeeping experience. The class will cover all aspects of basic beekeeping to prepare students to start keeping bees in 2020.

Tuition for the workshop is $85 per person if registered by Jan. 19 and $95 per person on or after Jan. 20. Banquet registration costs $30. Banquet registration closes Feb. 2. Continental breakfast, lunch and refreshments are included with the workshop.

Eastern Missouri Beekeepers Association:
info@easternmobeekeepers.com.
Bipartisan Senate bill seeks to create monarch, pollinator highways

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A bipartisan group of senators from Delaware, Oregon, South Dakota, and Tennessee has introduced new legislation to help states create pollinator-friendly habitats along roads and highways, addressing the steep decline of pollinator populations.

Specifically, the Monarch and Pollinator Highway (MPH) Act of 2019 would establish a federal grant program to carry out pollinator-friendly practices on roadsides and highway rights-of-way.

Transforming just a fraction of each state’s thousands of miles of green space around roads and highways back to natural pollinator habitat could make a real difference to pollinator populations.

Many state highway departments already build and maintain pollinator habitats along state-maintained roadways. This legislation could augment those state transportation departments’ efforts with federal funding.

MPH Act grants could be used for:

- Planting and seeding native, locally-appropriate grasses, wildflowers, and milkweed;
- Mowing strategies that promote early successional vegetation and limit disturbance during periods of highest use by target pollinator species;
- Implementing an integrated vegetation management approach to address weed and pest issues;
- Removing non-native grasses from planting and seeding mixes except for use as nurse or cover crops; or
- Any other pollinator-friendly practices the Secretary of Transportation determines would be eligible.

The bill also requires the federal Department of Transportation (DOT) to help states develop best practices around pollinator-friendly roads and highways.

What the sponsors say

“This bill will help states promote highway pollinator habitats along roadways.”
— Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN)

“Monarch butterflies and other pollinators’... population decline poses a profound threat to both American food supply and to the economic success of farmers.”
— Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE)

“Monarch and Pollinator Highway... population decline poses a profound threat to both American food supply and to the economic success of farmers.”

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)

“Monarch and Pollinator Highway... population decline poses a profound threat to both American food supply and to the economic success of farmers.”

Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD)

Western U.S. monarch butterfly populations hit a record low in 2018, with one researcher describing the drop as “potentially catastrophic.” The honey bee population has also seen dramatic declines in recent years, with a 40 percent year-over-year decline between 2018 and 2019, losses one expert described as “unsustainably high.” The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that approximately 35 percent of the world’s food crops depend on pollinators for survival.

State Fair prize-winning Honey Nut Loaf

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg. In a mixing bowl, beat together butter and brown sugar until creamy. Beat in honey until smooth. Beat in egg and vanilla. Add flour mixture in three parts, beginning and ending with flour, alternating with yogurt.

Mix all filling ingredients in a medium bowl. Spread half the batter into a greased loaf pan; top with filling mixture and cover with remaining batter. Bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes.

In a large bowl, whisk all glaze ingredients together. Spread over warm loaf. Allow glaze to harden before serving.

Yield: 1 loaf

from Ellenann Meier, Lexington
Raising bees, the Cuban way

A visiting Kentucky beekeeper finds Cuba’s state-controlled apiary industry has some interesting differences from the U.S., but has made impressive strides in production, protecting native bees, and breeding mite-resistant queens.

Story and photos special to BeeLines by David Donathan

I traveled in early November with a small group of American beekeepers (ranging from hobbyists to commercial producers) to learn about Cuban beekeeping practices by visiting the Center for the Study of Apiculture (CIAPI) in Havana and several apiaries/queen breeding centers in eastern and central Cuba.

National control

While the basic apicultural practice is very similar to what we do in the U.S., there are several key differences between Cuban and American beekeeping. The primary difference is that all Cuban beekeepers are full-time professionals who operate under the auspices of a national organization, Empresa Apicola Cubana (Cuban Beekeeping Company). Better known simply as Apicuba, this is the central government agency in charge of apiculture and honey production in Cuba.

Apicuba provides training, research, and resources to 1,532 Cuban beekeepers, all of whom are registered with the government. The apiaries are privately owned and operated as part of cooperatives. There are no hobbyist beekeepers in Cuba, and the number of hives, location, and other details are regulated.

Production goals are set by Apicuba for each beekeeper. “Normal” honey production per hive is estimated at 45-70 kilograms of honey per year, with production goals for

See CUBA, next page

The CIAPI research center operates a research apiary, studying Cuban bee genetics, bee diseases, and the impacts of honey production variables, including climate change.

The Cocal Queen Breeding Center, a CIAPI-certified queen breeding center, produces over 450 queens a month from about 400 breeding nucs in Cienfuegos Province. In addition to queen rearing, they also breed drones in special hives.

Finca Coincedencia: Located in Jovellanos, Matanzas Province, in eastern Cuba, Finca Coincedencia is a sustainable agriculture and arts center. In addition to honey producing apiaries, they operate a Paladar (private restaurant) which serves only foods grown on the farm, operate a family pottery, and farm mango, coffee and banyan trees. Finca Coincedencia Apairy has developed special hive boxes for raising and producing stingless bees (Melipona beecheii). Honey from these bees is sold usually for medical purposes.
beekeepers being set in tons. Honey production rates vary according to the time of year, but all of the beekeepers we visited were at or above production targets. They consider July and August to be the honey dearth period and November through December their higher production time frame.

**Chemical-free**

Another important difference is the prohibition of any chemicals in the hives. Control of Varroa mites (first found in Cuba in about 1996) is done by genetics and hive maintenance practices such as re-queening hives with high mite counts and frequent use of drone frames.

Queens are raised in certified centers and sold to beekeepers at a cost of about $3. The beekeepers we visited all said they re-queen every year or two, and will routinely re-queen a low-producing hive.

One goal of CIAPI is to protect “Cuban bees.” The importation of bees is strictly prohibited, and sanitary zones around port areas ensure that the Cuban bee population is not contaminated by foreign bees (there are no Africanized bees in Cuba). Between 2015-2018, CIAPI certified 295 maternal and 261 paternal genetic bee lineages in 8 Cuban provinces.

**Chocolate pollen**

The honey is sold to Apicuba (some beekeepers keep a small amount to sell privately), which has two plants at which honey is filtered and sent to the central Planta de Envasado (packaging plant) in Havana. It is sold and packaged primarily for export under the government Apisun label.

Author **David Donathan** was introduced to beekeeping as a hobby after retiring from the Army and from teaching. He is a member of the Lincoln Trails Beekeeping Association, the Kentucky State Beekeepers Association, and KDA’s Kentucky Proud Homegrown By Heroes program.
Not far from the picture-perfect tourist hubs of Santorini and Mykonos, where cruise ships unload tourists by the thousands, sits another Greek island, more rugged but no less remarkable. **Ikaria** is off the beaten path.

Up the winding mountain roads of this isolated isle, you’re likely to notice brightly-painted boxes dotting the landscape. And what’s happening inside those boxes is generating some buzz: bees busy making a rare honey that locals believe is one of the secrets to a long life.

Beekeeper Andoni Karimalis explained to correspondent Jonathan Vigliotti that islanders have been eating the honey for generations, to keep healthy and strong well into old age.

At work in her weaving studio, 109-year-old Yaya Joanna agrees there is something special about it. So does 87-year-old-beekeeper Giorgos Stenos. He eats the honey “every single day.” Chef Diane Kochilas has a spoonful every morning.

“So, when the locals here say it’s like their medicine, their daily vitamin, there’s truth to that,” Vigliotti said.

Research has found that people here have among the highest life expectancies in the world. And the University of Athens concluded that Ikarians are more than twice as likely as Americans to reach age 90, often in better health.

The honey is different from that on most supermarket shelves. “First of all, there’s no industrial farming on the island,” said Kochilas. “There are very few commercial undertakings whatsoever, so nature is pretty pure.”

As a result, the pollen and nectar collected by the bees is free of chemicals and pesticides normally found in commercial or private farming. And unlike most honey sold in the U.S., Ikarian honey is also unheated, unfiltered, and unpasteurized – all processes which can destroy the natural vitamins and minerals.

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