

STATE FAIR COVID-19 PROPOSAL APPROVED BY FAIR BOARD; AWAITS GOVERNOR'S FEEDBACK

Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles announced last week that the Kentucky State Fair Board has submitted a plan for a modified State Fair to the Governor's office. As of this writing, there is no word on whether the draft proposal will proceed.

We held publication of this issue past the scheduled June 1 date, hoping we could announce a finalized plan, but that word has not come down yet — understandably, considering the challenging and disturbing events that have demanded so much state government attention.

The call for entries, volunteers, and honey donations that typically kick off our advance coverage of the Kentucky State Fair in our June issue will thus have to wait until later.

When the plan is approved, you can expect a *BeeLines Extra* to call your attention to it. We appreciate your patience.



Tammy Potter demonstrates a healthy hive for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture newsletter *Grapevine*. (Chris Aldridge photo)

Tammy, Sarah and the hornets

By: Claire Kopsky, WLEX-18 News, May 19, 2020

LEXINGTON, Ky. — The first Asian giant hornet was spotted in the northwest contiguous U.S. for the first time in late 2019. Since then, Kentucky bee specialists have been taking precautions in the event the hornet travels to the Commonwealth.

Sarah Preston runs the **Certified Kentucky Honey Program (CKHP)** for the **Kentucky State Beekeepers Association (KSBA)**. “When an Asian giant hornet actually gets into a honey bee hive, it can eat almost 40 bees a minute,” she said. “So it can really go in there and just start devastating. It will eat bees. It will eat larvae. It will destroy the comb system in the hive.”



Sarah Preston, director, **Certified Kentucky Honey Program**.

See **HORNET**, next page

HORNET . . . from front page

So far in the U.S., the Asian giant hornet has been spotted only in Washington state, but Preston said it could move to other states quickly, perhaps hitchhiking in interstate shipments.

“Our state apiarist started putting out traps last year [2019] to be able to track them here in Kentucky,” Preston said.

Potter put traps around Lexington specifically because the area is a hub of international and domestic travel, and she thought the hornets might attach to various shipment items and relocate here to Kentucky, Preston said.

Honey bees essential

The honey bee population has been under challenge since the 1980s when the Varroa mite threat emerged.

Preston said a lack of honey bees would devastate our agricultural economy, since “a third of all U.S. crops are based on honey bees — not all native bees, but honey bees by themselves.”

The LEX-18 interview: lex18.com/news/covering-kentucky/specialists-protect-kentucky-bees-from-murder-hornet.



Left: Eloise Crowell sent a photo of a European hornet she found. Note the characteristic red marks on the thorax. **Right:** This Asian giant hornet queen, with her noticeable orange head, was found dead on a roadway in Washington state. (WSDA photo).



Chris Looney fills hornet traps. Kentucky State Apiarist Tammy Potter has set out and reviewed traps checking for hornet activity, and reports the Asian giant was not found to be present. (WSDA photo)

First hornet of 2020 found in Washington

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has confirmed the first sighting of an Asian giant hornet in Washington during 2020. The hornet found in late May has been confirmed to be a queen; had it been a worker, that would have indicated colonies had been established. Even if this queen had a hive, it would not survive without her, WSDA said.

“At this time, there is no evidence that Asian giant hornets are established in Washington state or anywhere else in the United States,” said an official with the federal Plant Protection and Quarantine program.

More on Asian giant hornets and Washington’s trapping program: agr.wa.gov/hornets [can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com]



They nest in the ground

The practice of nesting in the ground distinguishes the Asian giant hornet from Kentucky’s other hornet species. European hornets and so-called “bald-faced hornets” (actually more closely related to yellowjackets) nest in trees.

Although the risk in Kentucky remains low, if you think you have seen an Asian giant hornet, take photos if you can, preserve the body of a dead hornet (do not try to catch a live one), and contact the State Apiarist or the University of Kentucky Entomology Department to confirm the hornet’s identity.

SAVE THE DATE

July 25, 2020 — KSBA Summer Meeting

Perryville State Historic Site

1825 Battlefield Road, Perryville, Ky.

8:00 - 8:45	Registration			
9:00 - 9:45	Keynote Speaker (Shelter House) Paul Rice — “Honey House Designs and Challenges” Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Food Safety Branch			
Track	1st Year Beekeeper	2nd Year or Advanced Beekeeper		
Location	Field 1 (Beehive)	Field 2 (Beehive)	Presentations (Shelter House)	Lab (Civil War Hall)
10:00 - 10:45	Basic hive inspection	Making splits/nucs	Basic Hive Equipment	Looking For Mite Biting
11:00 - 11:45	Basic hive inspection	Frame Management	Swarm Catching	Nosema, pollen digestion and the internal anatomy of the honey bee
12:00 - 1:30	Boxed Lunch (Shelter House)			
12:30-1:30	Abbreviated Walking Tour of Perryville Battlefield (Meet at Shelter House)			
1:30 - 2:15	Varroa Management	Backyard Queen Rearing	Value added products	Looking For Mite Biting
2:30 - 3:15	Preparing for Fall/Winter	Other Hive Diseases	Making Creamed Honey	Nosema, pollen digestion and the internal anatomy of the honey bee
3:30-5:00	KSBA Business Meeting (Shelter House)			
5:00	Adjourn			

Expert advice available on handling American, European foulbrood

By Tammy Potter, State Apiarist

Two documents with guidance on hive management decisions related to **American foulbrood (AFB)** and **European foulbrood (EFB)** are available from the **Honey Bee Health Coalition (HBHC)**. Beekeepers need these documents, and they need diagnostic kits for each disease.

AFB is highly contagious, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has suspended the availability of **Broodsafe**, a phage-based product that could control AFB bacteria.

Autoclave down for duration

The autoclave at Kentucky State University (KSU) is out of commission until KSU goes back into session, so it is not available to sterilize equipment.

Compounding the challenge, the diagnostic lab at Belleville, Maryland, continues closed due to the COVID-19 emergency, so their diagnostic capacities are temporarily unavailable.

Beekeepers need to recognize and control these diseases. With AFB, even burning equipment may be necessary.

For all these reasons, I want to emphasize that beekeepers should get **diagnostic kits**. They cost about \$15; be sure to check expiration dates. When hives suffer diseases, if beekeepers take informed action quickly, other hives will not suffer.



AFB test kit. (Tammy Potter photo)

Use antibiotics for EFB only

Of the two diseases, EFB is less of a threat, and beekeepers do not need to destroy equipment. If beekeepers see EFB, they can call on a veterinarian to issue a **Veterinarian Feed Directive**, allowing purchase of an antibiotic (usually terramycin). Or they can re-queen the hive.

Antibiotics are a last resort for EFB, but are ineffective to treat AFB because they would simply mask AFB symptoms. Don't use antibiotics before foulbrood signs are shown; that could lead to widespread resistance to that class of drugs, possibly making these tools less effective in the future.



AFB "rope test"

AFB responds to the "rope test."

If you puncture a sunken wax capping with a toothpick, the liquefied larva forms a slight "rope." No other disease does this.

There may also be an intensely foul odor, hence the name.

IF YOU SEE THIS: The best advice is to quickly destroy the hive so that other hives will not "rob" honey from the AFB-affected hive, consequently spreading the disease.

The advice publications from the HBHC cover how to test and treat foulbrood, new Veterinary Feed Directive rules for antibiotics, and the importance of being vigilant.

An expert team of beekeepers, entomologists, apiary inspectors, and federal regulators produced and reviewed "Identifying and Mitigating Foulbrood in Honey Bee Colonies and Reducing the Use of Antibiotics: Information for Beekeepers and Veterinarians."

HBHC's information mission

HBHC helps make science-based beekeeping materials available to beekeepers at no cost. I have served on the HBHC Steering Committee since 2018.

The HBHC exists to bring together beekeepers, growers, researchers, government agencies, agribusinesses, conservation groups, manufacturers, brands, and other key partners to improve the health of honey bees and other pollinators. The HBHC is a project of the **Keystone Policy Center**.

View or download the guides: honeybeehealthcoalition.org/foulbrood.
More information: Matt Mulica, mmulica@keystone.org, (303) 531-5511.



European foulbrood. (Bee Informed Partnership photo)

Fight impure and foreign honey — with your camera!

The American Honey Producers Association (AHPA) wants your help in urging the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to update guidelines on honey labeling, said AHPA vice president **Chris Hiatt**.

Your photos wanted

The AHPA wants honey producers to take photos of honey labels encountered in the public, all around the United States.

“Our goal is primarily to find honey that is mislabeled according to current FDA guidelines,” Hiatt said.

“Secondarily, we need examples of any labels which misrepresent country of origin or are purposefully confusing to consumers, so that we can advocate for positive changes and updates,” he continued.

These collected label pictures will illustrate the need for more specific and consistent labeling requirements, said AHPA board member **Matt Halbegwachs** of Texas.

“We want less ambiguity and more standardization on honey labels. The pictures will also be helpful as we continually work towards a more specific Commercial Item Description (CID),” he said.

The CID is a standard product description used by the FDA. A Federal definition of honey does not currently exist; honey is defined differently state-to-state.

The long-standing issue has recently become time-sensitive, Halbegwachs said, as the group recently received \$1.5 million from Congress to update their testing

You can prove the purity and local origin of your honey by having it certified through the Kentucky Certified Honey Program (KCHP), managed by Sarah Preston.



“We need as many pictures of honey on the store shelf as possible. Please take a few minutes to help collect this data.”

— AHPA vice president Chris Hiatt

capabilities. A plentiful selection of labels will help AHPA demonstrate the need for standards.

Halbegwachs said such standards will enable honey consumers to more easily determine if honey contains additives, identify a product’s country of origin, and determine a product’s source.

An allied group, the Honey Integrity Task Force, has also been active for several years, and has returned satisfactory results testing national brands for adulteration with non-honey products such as corn syrup.

Submit photos through the “**AHPA app**”, downloaded from the App Store or Google Play.

Chris Hiatt, AHPA vice president, (559) 232-2494. See Hiatt’s video on honey fraud at ahpanet.com.

— AHPA press release

State Fair prize-winning honey recipe

Honey barbecue sauce

A honey-enhanced barbecue sauce for outdoor grilling.

1 c. ketchup	½ t. pepper
½ c. honey	¼ t. paprika
¼ c. vinegar	¼ t. chili powder
¼ c. molasses	¼ t. garlic powder
1 t. liquid smoke	¼ t. cayenne pepper
½ t. salt	

Stir ketchup, honey, vinegar, and molasses together in a saucepan over medium heat until smooth. Add liquid smoke and all other seasonings. Stir to blend, reduce heat, and simmer for about 20 minutes to thicken. Pour into a clean pint jar and seal.

— Ellenann Meier, Lexington

Remember that State Fair entrant honey recipes must be primarily sweetened by honey.

Donated nucs to spark KSU queen-rearing classes

The Kentucky Queen Bee Breeders Association Inc. (KQBBAI) is working with Kentucky State University and Purdue University to form a satellite breeding program.

Dorothey Morgan, KQBBAI president and queen bee inseminator, will acquire frames of breeder stock from Purdue to graft, raising queens that will become breeding stock for next year.

Morgan said the plan is to set up queen rearing classes to train students to graft from this top survival stock and to make mite-biter queens to take home to their apiaries.

KQBBAI donated 10 nucs, as did lifetime member Dwight Wells, and Chasing Feral Honey Bees is donating nucs as well.

“We have a great team, and hope to replace all commercial stock at the university with mite-biting bees,” Morgan said.

KQBBAI breeds Purdue queens for mite-biting propensity, to serve as a natural weapon against Varroa mite infestation.



Spring queening

This year the Kentucky Queen Bee Breeders Association, Inc. (KQBBAI) is making available to its members a single-season inseminated breeder queen worth \$160 for the price of \$50. They have contracted to distribute 48-hour cells to their community at a cost of \$10 each. The group’s Facebook page has information for purchase of these cells. Bonnie Joseph (*below*) was the first to receive her queen. (Dorothey Morgan photos)



Those attending inspector apiary training properly distanced themselves for a group photo. (L-r) Michael Williams, “Mosey the beekeeping dog,” Brad Smith, John Pitcock, Carla Hart, Tammy Potter, Brian Burkhart, Blake Thompson, Dickie White, Leigh Ann French, Ray Morgan, Jeff Poland, Paul Knarr, and Clayton Wilson.

Apiarist helps KDA pesticide inspectors get comfortable around bees

Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) pesticide inspectors participated in a Pollinator Workshop last month at the Fayette County apiary of State Apiarist Tammy Potter.

The training helped the inspectors obtain new levels of comfort while dealing with bees. Inspectors may have to investigate beehives if the KDA receives a complaint from a beekeeper claiming that the misuse of pesticides killed some or all of their bees.

With summer approaching and pesticide spraying increasing in frequency with the rising temperatures, beekeepers can be better protected by listing their hive

locations with the Pollinator Protection app sponsored by KDA. Beekeepers registered on the free app are notified if chemical applicators plan to spray a product that requires communication with area beekeepers.

The app, on which beekeepers have listed their beehive locations, automatically emails the registered beekeepers giving 48 hours’ notice of the spraying.

“I received an email from someone doing a pesticide spraying the other day,” Potter said. “It was really satisfying to see how it worked.”

Create your listing at kyagr-apps.com/Pollinator/.

UK offering free honey bee virus evaluation

Dr. Clare Rittschof, an entomologist at the University of Kentucky (UK), is looking for beekeepers to participate in a study on honey bee viruses being conducted through this October.

The study seeks to determine if supplemental nutrition helps honey bees fend off infection by common viruses, and also to provide information to beekeepers that could improve hive management, survival, and honey production.

What do I get for taking part?

For each hive taking part in the study, Dr. Rittschof will provide a free assessment of the viruses infecting the hive, and the degree of infection.

This information usually costs several hundred dollars. The cost of this study is covered by the **Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund**.

“We will also provide an estimate of Varroa mite loads, and recommendations about ways to improve hive health,” Dr. Rittschof said.

What do I have to do?

Any beekeeper can participate, regardless of experience level or management approach. UK will provide all the information beekeepers need to be successful. Participating beekeepers will:

- 1) Allow a member of the research team to collect two samples of about 300 worker bees (about a half-cup) from a single hive, one month apart. This is the same amount of bees collected for a Varroa mite alcohol wash test. UK will preserve the bees and take them to Dr. Rittschof's lab for virus analysis.
- 2) Add and remove a pollen patty to a hive once a week for four weeks. The research team will supply the patties and provide instructions.
- 3) Answer some basic questions about hive management approaches and hive age and origin. The questions are at right. All information is kept confidential and anonymous.

To schedule a time to collect bees, or to learn more about the project:
Dr. Clare Rittschof, clare.rittshof@uky.edu.

Survey questions

1. How long have you had this beehive?
(e.g.: *less than one year, 1 year, 2 years*)
2. How did you obtain this hive?
(e.g.: *caught a feral swarm, purchased a package, split from an existing hive*)
3. What is the source of the queen, and when is the last time you replaced her?
(e.g.: *reared my own, purchased from vendor, allowed colony to replace; last fall, last week*)
4. Do you provide your bees nutritional supplements? If so, what type?
(e.g.: *yes; pollen patties, sugar syrup in hive, pollen feeders in apiary, sugar syrup in apiary*)
5. When do you typically feed your bees?
(e.g.: *spring, over winter, summer, fall*)
6. When was the last time you provided food to this hive?
7. How often do you typically replace the honeycomb inside your bee hive?
(e.g.: *every 2 years, never*)
8. When is the last time you removed/replaced honeycomb in this hive?
(e.g.: *have not done so, this spring*)
9. Do you treat your colonies for any pests, diseases, or parasites?
(e.g.: *small hive beetle, Varroa mite, Nosema, AFB*)
10. What treatments do you use for pests, diseases, and parasites?
(e.g.: *none, Apivar, oxalic acid, beetle traps, Swiffer sheets, Fumigillin*)
11. For what do you use your honey bees?
(e.g.: *pollination, honey, candle production*)

Not your typical week

Celebrate pollinators, plants, people, planet during National Pollinator Week June 22-28

Pollinator Partnership announces **June 22-28, 2020** has been designated **National Pollinator Week**, though public acknowledgment and celebrations will fall short of previous years.

“Due to the current COVID-19 situation, Pollinator Week 2020 will not be a typical Pollinator Week,” according to the website of the organization.

The group urges everyone to hold socially distant, appropriate events. In an effort to lighten the load on state governments, the organization is not pursuing formal state proclamations this year. They will continue to post any proclamations they do receive.

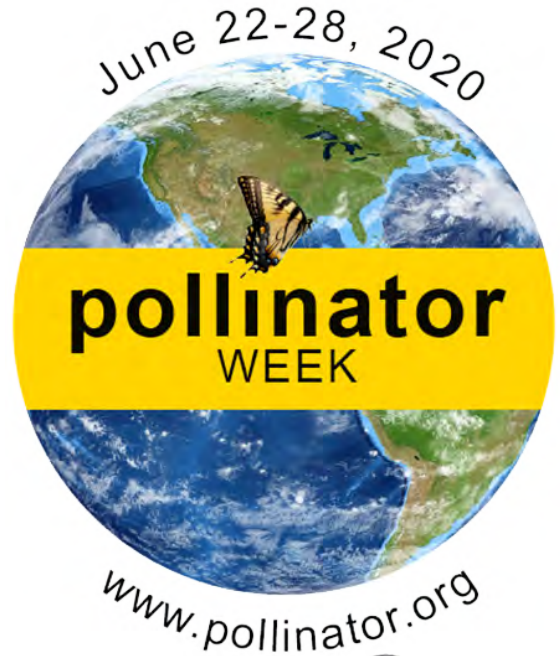
“Moreover, we encourage everyone to go outside and spend some time with the bees and butterflies that inspire hope in many. National Pollinator Week is a time to celebrate pollinators and spread the word about what you can do to protect them,” according to the website.

Thirteen years ago, the U.S. Senate’s unanimous approval and designation of a week in June as “National Pollinator Week” marked a necessary step toward addressing the urgent issue of declining pollinator populations.

Pollinator Week has now grown into an international celebration of the valuable ecosystem services provided by bees, birds, butterflies, bats and beetles.

Pollinator Week was initiated by and is managed by Pollinator Partnership.

— *Pollinator Partnership press release*



The KDA Pollinator Protection Stakeholders group will meet June 30 as a virtual event. The same speakers will be present on video. Group members will be sent information on how to log in and participate. Complete details in the next edition of *BeeLines*.



As if we didn't have enough to worry about inside the hives...

“I guess it is time to put the electric fence back up,” said **Ray Tucker, Jr.**, of **Solar Place Farm** in Somerset, as he shot this photo of the first bear invading his farm.

“I only have two hives, but don't want to be an attractive nuisance,” Tucker said.

Ray is a former president of the **Lake Cumberland Beekeepers Association**, and has been president of **Kentuckians for the Commonwealth**.