Grant approved for UK hive virus research lab

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADB) gave final approval at their Feb. 21 meeting to a $94,928 two-year grant, funding University of Kentucky assistant professor of entomology Dr. Clare Rittschof to establish a bee virus testing lab.

The grant will allow the hiring of four undergraduate students to research nutrition as a mitigating factor in bees suffering from viruses and other hazards. This project will test how nutritional stress impacts viral presence and abundance in bees, particularly for viruses with unusually high infection rates in Kentucky.

Viruses that affect honey bees play an important role in linking stressors like Varroa mite presence and poor nutrition to hive mortality, Rittschof said. Infected hives can fight off a virus, but additional stressors increase virus levels and makes it more likely the hive will show symptoms.

One graduate student is also approved in the grant to devote efforts entirely to processing bee samples and testing hives for viruses.

“If a beekeeper knows the levels of certain viruses present in hives, the beekeeper can control hive stress through management techniques including supplementing food and controlling mite loads,” Rittschof said.

Since January 2019, KADB has awarded more than $240,000 in Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund (KADF) grants to support Kentucky beekeeping development.

More information: Dr. Clare Rittschof, (859) 218-3343, or clare.rittschof@uky.edu.

Your local bank and KAFC can finance your new infrastructure

If you want to expand your current beekeeping operation (for example, by adding a honey house), the Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation (KAFC) can partner with you and your local lender.

KAFC and the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADB) supervise the Agricultural Infrastructure Loan Program, an effort that has funded agricultural facilities.

Bill McCloskey, of the Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy (GOAP), said the first step to obtaining a KAFC loan is to plan your project with your local lender. The lender then approaches KAFC with the details of the bank-approved funding. The loan officer works with KAFC staff on the beekeeper’s behalf.

The beekeeper and lender show KAFC the bank-approved budget estimates for the proposed infrastructure project. For a honey house, KAFC would want to see estimates of construction costs from builders, quotes on installing pipes from plumbers, estimates on wiring from electricians, and other figures.

“You don’t want to have to keep coming back to the board because you underestimated costs,” McCloskey said.

KAFC’s monthly application deadline is each third Friday. The next deadline is March 19.

— Article reviewed by Marielle McElmurray, Director of Public Affairs, Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy.
WINTER EVENTS

MARCH


- March 7. Pre-register with online forms or postmarked by March 2 for Bluegrass Beekeepers School, Kentucky State University, Frankfort. Follow signs to parking at Bradford Hall. Speaker: Dr. Clarence Collison, entomologist emeritus, Mississippi State University. Registration 8 a.m. EST, classes 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. for first- and second-year beekeepers, plus classes on queen rearing, candle making, honey labeling, and Varroa mite treatments. Pre-registration $35 adults, $10 high school age and younger. Family rates: $45 for one adult and two or more children, $70 for two adults and two or more children. Registration at the door $45 per adult, $15 per child. Lunch included.

  To register and pay online: beeschool.eventsmtart.com/events/bluegrass-beekeeping-school/.

- March 7. Pollinator Information Day. 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Washington County Extension Office, 245 Corporate Drive, Springfield, Free, no registration required. Speaker: Shelby Fulton, Kentucky Nature Preserve, 1 p.m., on native bees of Kentucky, their habitat problems, and how you can help with pollinator-friendly gardens. Meet experienced local beekeepers and get answers to questions about equipment, bee colonies, honey production, and local beekeeping resources. Appearance scheduled by the Kentucky State University autoclave.

  Washington County Extension Office, (859) 336-7741.

- March 9. Bee School D to Z (After the ABCs). 6-8 p.m. EDT, Pulaski County Cooperative Extension Office, 28 Parkway Drive, Somerset. $5 per session, at the door. Third of five sessions with Dorothey Morgan, Kentucky Queen Bee Breeders Association. Learn about building nucs, splits, and super hives; and how to use 48-hour cells to requeen. Attend this class and sessions #4 on April 17 and #5 on May 21 for a free 48-hour cell.

BeeLines • March 2020 • 2

CHECK FOR UPDATES: www.kyagr.com

- March 21. Northern Kentucky Beekeepers Intermediate School (Intermediate Beekeeping 201). Boone County Enrichment Center, Lower Level, 1824 Patrick Dr., Burlington. 9 a.m.-4 p.m CDT. Speakers: Dorothey Morgan and Dwight Wells. $20 members, $25 non-members, $5 children 12 and under. Lunch included.

- March 21. Ohio County Beekeepers Association School. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. CDT. Ohio County Extension Office, 1337 Union Street, Hartford. Speaker: Tammy Horn Potter.

  More: ohiocountybeekeepers@gmail.com, or call or text Kristi Willoughby, (270) 775-2446.

- March 28. Kentucky State Beekeepers Association (KSBA) spring meet, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. EDT, Elizabethtown. Speaker: Dr. Jay Evans, research director of the USDA-ARS Beltsville Bee Lab.


  Both events at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, Regional Postsecondary (FPC) Building, 600 College Street Road.


APRIL

- April 4. Honey Depot Spring Beekeepers School. Cedar Ridge Retreat Center, 4010 Old Routt Rd., Louisville. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. EDT.

  Fee and registration information on this and other spring 2020 workshops: HoneyBearFarmsKY.com.

- April 9-11. Lake Barkley Beekeepers School. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. CDT daily. Kent Williams residence, 580 State Route 385 North, Wingo. No cost to attend, but donations accepted. Lunch provided by Lake Barkley Beekeepers Association. Basic hive inspection, equipment assembly, pests and diseases, queen rearing (beginning and advanced), swarm trapping, dowsing for bees, value-added products from the hive, and nuc and package installation.

- April 23-26. Eastern Kentucky Four-Day Intensive Queen Workshop. Pike County Cooperative Extension Office, 148 Trivette Drive, Pikeville. $175 fee, in advance. Limited to 20 participants. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. EDT.

  Pike County Extension Office, (606) 432-2534, or Neil Hunt, (606) 794-9081.

Beth Wilson, (606) 679-6361 or beth.wilson@uk.edu.
Dorothey Morgan, lavenderlanefarms@gmail.com.
The Kentucky State Beekeepers Association (KSBA) Board will meet March 27 at 6 p.m. EDT in advance of the general members meeting the following day.

The Board meeting will be held at the Comfort Suites Hotel, 215 Commerce Drive, Elizabethtown.

Registration opens at 7 a.m. for the general spring meeting, set for 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. March 28, at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, 600 College Street Road, Elizabethtown.

Three tracks of instruction are as below, at the concurrent Hardin County Beekeepers Association Beekeeping School.

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### Hardin County Beekeepers Association Beekeeping School & Kentucky State Beekeepers Association’s Spring Meeting

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 - 8:00</td>
<td>Registration - Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, Regional Postsecondary Center (RPC) entry hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 - 8:10</td>
<td>Welcome and opening remarks by David Shockey, President HCBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:10 - 9:00</td>
<td><strong>Keynote Speaker: Dr. Jay Evans</strong>, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), United States Department of Agriculture - Research on New Tools for bee Colony Management</td>
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<td>New and Beginner Classes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Practicing Beekeeper Classes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other Interesting Topics</td>
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<td>Room# 516</td>
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<td>Room # 505</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 - 9:10</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:10 - 10:10</td>
<td><strong>Economics of Beekeeping - Beekeeping Equipment and Costs</strong>David Shockey</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advantages of making Nucs and Splits --- Chris Renfrow</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Free Bees with Labor</strong> --- Joe Taylor</td>
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<td>10:10 - 10:20</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:20 - 11:20</td>
<td><strong>Honey Bee Biology</strong> --- Leonard Davis</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Proper Labeling of Honey for Sale</strong> --- Leslie Cobb</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Genes, germs, and stress</strong> --- Dr. Jay Evans</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:20 - 11:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 - 12:30</td>
<td><strong>First Year Beekeeping Calendar what to expect</strong> --- David Shockey</td>
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<td><strong>Best Management Practices and Pest Management</strong> --- Dr. Tammy Potter</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>After the Harvest - Value Added Products: Candle Making and Other Products</strong> --- Calvin Clemons and Troy Winters</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 - 1:15</td>
<td>Lunch - catered by HCBA; Jay Evans and Leslie Cobb available for Q&amp;A in Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:20 - 2:20</td>
<td><strong>Best Management Practices and Pest Management</strong> --- David Shockey or Dr. Tammy Potter</td>
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<td><strong>Queen Rearing</strong> --- Chris Renfrow</td>
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<td><strong>Certified Honey Producers – Open Forum</strong> --- Mike Mabry &amp; Sarah Preston</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:15 - 2:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 - 3:15</td>
<td><strong>Advantages of Having a Mentor &amp; Joining a Local Association and KSBA</strong> --- Burt Thompson</td>
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<td><strong>Frame Management</strong> --- David Shockey</td>
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<td><strong>Proper Labeling of Honey for Sale</strong> --- Leslie Cobb</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:15 - 3:30</td>
<td>Session Leaders will be the last speaker for each group plus other speakers and HCBA members.</td>
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<td>3:30 - 3:45</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:45 - 4:00</td>
<td>Drawings/door prizes,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4:00 - 5:00 -- KSBA &amp; the Certified Honey Program</td>
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Hummingbirds’ pollination role to be highlighted

Hummingbirds get their turn as the spotlight pollinator at the Pollinator Stakeholders’ Spring Meeting April 6-7 at Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park in the Marshall County community of Gilbertsville. **Reservations are necessary, as space is limited.**

A featured speaker is **Nancy Grant**, author of *Binge Birding: Twenty Days with Binoculars*. Copies of her book will be available for purchase.

**Speaker schedule, Tuesday, April 7**

(all times CDT)

8-9 a.m. Check-in
Meeting Room
Kentucky Dam State Resort Lodge

9-9:50 **Michael Williams**
Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Director, Division of Environmental Services
State mosquito abatement programs, pesticide approvals.

10-10:50 **Robert Myers**
Kentucky State Parks
Pollinator programs overview.

11-11:50 **Nancy Grant**
Author, *Binge Birding: Twenty Days with Binoculars*
Hummingbirds, host plants, habitats.

12-1 p.m. Lunch
Books available for purchase.

1-2 **Rachel Cook**
Energy and Environmental Cabinet Botanist
Hummingbird walk.

2-3 KFW and KDA Pollinator Plans updates

3-3:30 Invitation to fall stakeholders’ meeting

Spaces must also be reserved for the Monday nature walk, Monday evening dinner at **Momma D’s Italian restaurant** in nearby Calvert City, and the Tuesday lunch at **Kentucky Dam Village State Park Lodge** (capped at 50 places).

Other nearby options for Monday’s dinner include the Kentucky Dam Village Lodge dining room, and Patti’s Settlement.

Those interested in participating in these events, please email Tammy Potter in advance to make reservations, to learn the required items for the nature walk, and to let organizers know of any dietary restrictions.

**Email Tammy Potter at tammy.potter@ky.gov.**

Gilbertsville welcomes pollinator meeting

**Gilbertsville** is a Marshall County community located near the north shore of Kentucky Lake, known for being the closest community to Kentucky Dam.

The 25-acre **Kentucky Sheriffs’ Boys and Girls Ranch**, which provides free week-long summer camps for ages 8-11, has been a fixture of Gilbertsville for several decades, and has served tens of thousands of Kentucky youth.

Tourism around the dams and lakes has driven the economy of the town since the 1940s. Gilbertsville has an airport, an 18-hole golf course, a car racing track, and a large marina.

Gilbertsville is also home to Maggie’s Jungle Golf and Jungle Run, a nature trail, picnic area, auto animal safari, and mini-golf course.
Washington, D.C., Feb. 26 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced updates to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP for short).

These updates include changes required by the 2018 Farm Bill as well as discretionary changes intended to improve the administration of the program and clarify existing program requirements.

“Honey bee producers should pay close attention to the ELAP program changes to ensure they meet the new deadline requirements,” said FSA administrator Richard Fordyce.

“These changes better align two key disaster assistance program deadlines to provide consistency and ease of management for honey bee producers,” Fordyce said.

Program changes

- ELAP was previously administered based on FSA’s fiscal year, but will now run according to the calendar year.
- Producers are still required to submit an application for payment within 30 calendar days of the end of the program year. This is not a policy change but will affect the deadline. The signup deadline for calendar year 2020 losses is Jan. 30, 2021.
- Starting in 2020, producers will have 15 days, instead of 30 days, from when the loss is first apparent to file a honey bee notice of loss.

This change provides consistency between ELAP and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, which also has a 15-day notice of loss period for honey.
- Program participants who were paid for the loss of a honey bee colony or hive in either or both of the previous two years will be required to provide additional documentation to substantiate how current year inventory was acquired.
- If the honey bee colony loss incurred was because of colony collapse disorder (CCD), program participants must provide a producer certification that the loss was a direct result of at least three of the five symptoms of CCD, which include:
  - the loss of live queen and/or drone bee populations inside the hives;
  - rapid decline of adult worker bee population outside the hives, leaving brood poorly or completely unattended;
  - absence of dead adult bees inside the hive and outside the entrance of the hive;
  - absence of robbing collapsed colonies; and
  - at the time of collapse, Varroa mite and Nosema populations were not at levels known to cause economic injury or population decline.

About the program

For honey bees, ELAP covers colony losses, honey bee hive losses (the physical structure), and honey bee feed losses in instances where the colony, hive, or feed has been destroyed by a natural disaster, or, in the case of colony losses, by CCD. Colony losses must be in excess of normal mortality.

For more information on ELAP, visit: farmers.gov/recover.
To locate your local FSA office, visit: farmers.gov/service-locator.
Where to investigate getting permits for flavored honey

Last month, in our story about the Kentucky Department of Public Health's labeling requirements when flavorings are added to creamed honey, we should have included the link to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Food Safety Branch, where “food manufacturer” permits may be obtained, if you want to take that path.

The website is https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dphps/fsb/Pages/foodmanufacturing.aspx.

Also, you may contact Leslie Y. Cobb, Food Safety Branch honey labeling specialist, for further assistance, at leslie.cobb@ky.gov.

Five-member ethics board created

Conduct code adopted unanimously, applies to all affiliated with KSBA

The Kentucky State Beekeepers Association (KSBA) Board of Directors has added a code of conduct to its official policy manual.

The code of conduct applies to KSBA members, officers, directors, employees, volunteers, vendors, and contractors.

The 11 principles embodied in the code emphasize mutual civility, respect, professionalism, and fairness, while seeking to eliminate discrimination, personal prejudices, and harassment.

The code constructs an ethics board of two males, two females, and a KSBA director, charged with recommending appropriate actions to the KSBA president after they have received and evaluated confidential complaints.

The final draft of the code of conduct was introduced at a recent meeting of association presidents. Upon its unanimous adoption by the board of directors, the code was to be added to the KSBA Policies and Procedures Manual and published on the KSBA website.

Its provisions are effective immediately.

Online beginner beekeeping education

MATT DOUCETTE offers at his “New Bee University” an online course for beginner beekeepers. It costs approximately $125, materials included. Here Matt recruits a student at the recent South Central Beekeepers School.

(Tammy Potter photo)

State Fair ribbon-winning honey recipe

Honey cornbread

Goes great with a March staple, soup beans.

½ c. corn meal
1½ c. unbleached flour
1 T. baking powder
¼ t. baking soda
½ t. salt
½ c. honey
½ c. vegetable oil
3 T. butter, melted
2 eggs, beaten
1½ c. milk

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, combine cornmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Mix well. Add honey, oil, butter, eggs and milk. Stir to combine. Pour into a greased 8 x 11 inch pan. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes.

Yield: 12 servings. — Ellenann Meier, Lexington
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting public comment this month on interim decisions regarding the control of certain neonicotinoid pesticides.

The affected pesticides are acetamiprid, clothianidin, dinotefuran, imidacloprid, and thiamethoxam. This group of insecticides is used on a wide variety of crops, turf, ornamentals, pets (for flea treatment), and other residential and commercial indoor and outdoor uses.

In the pending interim decisions, EPA proposes:

- management measures to help keep pesticides on the intended target and reduce the amount used on crops associated with potential ecological risks;
- requiring the use of additional personal protective equipment to address potential occupational risks;
- restrictions on when pesticides can be applied to blooming crops in order to limit exposure to bees;
- language on labels that advises homeowners not to use neonicotinoid products; and
- cancelling spray uses of imidacloprid on residential turf under the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) due to health concerns.

Additionally, the agency is working with industry on developing and implementing stewardship and best management practices. The agency now requires bee hazard warnings on hazardous pesticide labels (see illustration).

Comment will be accepted by EPA through April 3. Visit the EPA website below for information on each controlled pesticide, and to review the protective measures EPA has originated to safeguard pollinators.

Text of proposed interim decisions for each pesticide: epa.gov/pollinator-protection/proposed-interim-registration-review-decision-neonicotinoids.
4-H essay contest offers honey bee writers $1,500 in prizes

National First Prize $750
Second Prize $500, Third Prize $250

Steps to earning the $750 National First Prize in the 2020 Honey Bee Essay Contest, open to active 4-H students:

- Contact your 4-H office for complete contest details.
- Write your Honey Bee Essay Contest entry according to the following rules.
- Send the work to your local 4-H office by mid-March, observing the deadlines following.
- The local 4-H offices should each select and forward one winning essay to Dr. Tom Webster (thomas.webster@kysu.edu), Kentucky State University, by March 23.
- Dr. Webster will choose the winning Kentucky essay, and will send it to the 4-H national office by April 1. National winners will be announced June 1.

The statewide selection of one Kentucky winner will be done only through the Kentucky 4-H system, and is open to active 4-H members only.

The contest is sponsored by The Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees Inc. The three national prizewinning essays will be published in the ABF Quarterly, the magazine of the American Beekeeping Federation.

Put on your thinking cap

An essential judging criterion is the scope of research put forth in developing the ideas behind your essay — accounting for 40 percent of your score. The number of sources consulted, the authority of the sources and the variety of the sources are all evaluated.

Personal interviews with beekeepers and others familiar with the subject are valued sources of information and should be documented.

Pro-tip: “Honey bee” is properly two words. (There are other kinds of bees besides those that make honey.)

All authors of essays submitted to the national competition will receive a relevant book on honey bees, beekeeping or honey.

2020 essay topic:

Overwintering:
Bee Survival Through the Cold Season

Honey bees have developed special skills to overwinter in the United States. Discuss one of these skills, and then include a discussion about what you do to prepare your hives for winter.

Include a photo of one of your hives, either using infrared technology or showing winter wrap, hay bales, special feeders, etc., to demonstrate how you prepare your hives for winter.

Rules overview

- Essays must be 750 to 1,000 words, on the stated topic only, typewritten or computer-generated double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman or similar type style, on one side of white paper, following standard manuscript format.
- Judging criteria: Scope of research, 40 percent; accuracy, 30 percent; creativity, 10 percent; conciseness, 10 percent; and logical development of the topic, 10 percent.
- All factual statements and interview references must be cited in a “resources” or “bibliography” list.
- On a separate page, a brief biographical sketch of the essayist, including complete mailing address, email address, and telephone number, must accompany the essay.
- Final judging will be by the Foundation’s Essay Committee, whose decision is final. National winners will be announced May 6, 2019. All national entries become the property of the Foundation. No essays will be returned.
- 4-H’ers who have previously placed first, second, or third at the national level are NOT eligible to enter. However, state competition winners remain eligible to enter the national competition.
- Decisions made by Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees trustees during national judging are final.
- All national competition entries become the property of the foundation and may be used as it sees fit. No essays will be returned.

Questions: Molly Sausaman, Executive Director, Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees: (720) 616-1415, or msausaman@abfnet.org.
On January 12, 2020, monarch butterflies began stirring in the oyamel trees in Morelia, Mexico. Many had come down to the forest floor for a daily drink of water. In a matter of weeks, they would begin their spring migration north in pursuit of milkweed. Their numbers appear to be up this year, thanks in large part to efforts of conservationists such as Homero Gómez González and Raúl Hernández Romero.

One day before he disappeared, González, a defender of the monarchs and the forests of Mexico, stood before a video camera to do what he did best – educate the public about the habits of the monarchs. Orange and black butterflies floated around him as he spread his arms in tribute.

The next day he was gone from Morelia forever, presumably another victim in the long-simmering clash among environmentalists, gangs, and illegal logging operations. A few days later, Romero also disappeared.

In El Rosario, the sanctuary both men helped build, the monarchs draped off branches, forming parabolas that touched the ground in some places. To stand in the Montane Valley outside the forest is to be surrounded by fluttering wings.

We can only hope that González’s and Romero’s last visions were of the beauty and diversity they helped defend.

Here in Kentucky, stakeholders have worked together for the past five years to develop two Pollinator Plans: a Pollinator Protection Plan overseen by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA), and a Monarch Conservation Plan overseen by the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources (KFW). Both plans promote habitat for all Kentucky pollinators, including monarchs and other butterflies, bees, wasps, flies, and hummingbirds. Our efforts have united with other states across the continent to provide pollinator nutrition and sanctuary.

As stakeholders, it is our sincere desire that neither González’s nor Romero’s efforts on behalf of monarchs be in vain. At our Pollinator Stakeholder meeting April 7, we will discuss various organizations that provide assistance to butterfly sanctuaries, and encourage tributes to the memory of González, Romero, and their efforts to protect the overwintering homes of monarch butterflies.

All details: sierraclub.org/sierra/scenes-crime-mexico-monarch-butterfly-defenders-murder