

BEE AWARE

News and Notes from The Texas Apiary Inspection Service



Paul W. Jackson

Paul W. Jackson
State Entomologist &
Chief Apiary Inspector
TX Apiary Inspection
Service
Entomology Dept.
Texas A&M University

The Texas Apiary Inspection Service (TAIS) has been very busy during the winter months because this is the time of year when we are issuing Importation Permits and taking orders for queen tags. A word to our young or new beekeepers: this is when we take applications from out-of-state beekeepers requesting an Importation Permit in order to bring a shipment of bee hives and/or equipment into the state of Texas. If a beekeeper files an application in accordance with state law, and TAIS is satisfied that the shipment does not pose a threat to disease control in the beekeeping industry, this agency shall issue a permit authorizing the shipment. The same thing applies to queen breeders in the state of Texas. A beekeeper or queen breeder may offer to sell a queen bee and attendant bees, package bees, nuclei, or queen cells in this state if the shipment of bees are accompanied with a copy of a certificate (queen tags) from TAIS certifying that the apiary or queen yard has been inspected within the calendar year. At the present time, we have 12 beekeepers applying for queen tags for this shipping season.

After January 3, 2005, everything STOPPED!! All of a sudden, this agency was getting phone calls, overnight mail, exportation applications, and almond brokers and state agencies requesting names of commercial beekeepers. The movement of bringing bees into Texas not only stopped, but the trend was to export bees to California in large numbers in a very short period of time. It is my understanding that the queen breeders are booking orders for queen and package bees, and some breeders have already sold out. What is going on?



California almond growers need over one million hives for pollination, and the honey bee is practically the only pollinating insect of economic

importance for almonds, which require a heavy bee population. At the present time, there are no sufficient mobile colonies in California, or in adjoining states, to satisfactorily pollinate the current almond orchards. Maximum production requires at least two to three strong colonies per acre.

Remember, almond producers in the United States are limited almost exclusively to California, which produces more than one-third of the world's almond supply. Also remember, in January, a snow storm hit the western part of the U.S. and heavy rains and mud slides hit California. These factors have driven the rental fee from \$50/hive to \$100+/hive which is inviting competition from other beekeepers.

The flood of imported honey from China and Southeast Asia has forced honey

ing to contend with severe loss of fall bee forage as a result of the wind and flood damage caused by the hurricanes in 2004. All of this will make 2005 a very interesting year for the TAIS, and we will be sure to keep you posted of any more new developments concerning honey bees and beekeeping.



prices down. Reports suggest that colonies of bees are severely weakened by miticide-resistant varroa. Beekeepers in the Southeast United States are hav-

