



March 4, 2011

**Register to Vote in the Implementation Referendum for the
Proposed California Apiary Research Commission**

(Registration Forms due May 30, 2011)

To All Eligible Beekeepers:

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is currently conducting a registration process for eligible beekeepers (see definition on Page 2 of this notice) to participate in a referendum to determine if the proposed California Apiary Research Commission shall become operative. This proposed program was enacted into law on January 1, 2011 via the recent passage of AB 1912. However, in order for this proposed program to be implemented, it must also be approved by a super-majority of eligible beekeepers in an implementation referendum, which will be conducted by CDFA during the month of July. Enclosed with this cover letter are a registration form and a postage-paid, return envelope. All eligible beekeepers must register and provide proof of eligibility in order to vote in this referendum. No action is required if you do not meet the qualifications of an eligible beekeeper as defined.

Overview of Proposed California Apiary Research Commission:

The California Apiary Research Commission Law (reference Chapter 28 of Part 2 of Division 22 of the California Food and Agricultural Code) can be accessed at:

<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt/ordslaws.html>.

- The Commission would be authorized to carry out programs of education, market analyses, and research relating to honeybees and the beekeeping industry.
- The operations of the Commission would be directed by a seven-member board of directors consisting of six elected beekeepers and one appointed public member. Beekeeper representation is allocated to both California beekeepers and beekeepers whose principle residence is outside of the state but who bring bees into California for commercial purposes.
- The day to day operations of the Commission would be carried out by a staff to be hired or contracted with by the Commission.
- The Commission would be funded by a mandatory assessment levied annually on all bee colonies located in California on March 1 of each year. The rate of this assessment would be set annually by the Commission's elected board of directors at any level at or below the maximum allowable rate, which is one dollar (\$1.00) per colony. Assessments would be paid directly to the California Apiary Research Commission as directed by the Commission
- Beekeepers with 50 colonies or less would be exempt from paying the assessment.
- CDFA would conduct a public hearing every fifth year to determine if the proposed Commission should continue in operation.

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Voter Registration Eligibility:

The Commission Law defines an eligible beekeeper as an individual beekeeper or business who owns and/or operates more than 50 colonies in California with intent to earn income. If you meet the qualifications of an eligible beekeeper as defined, please complete all sections of the enclosed registration form and attach a copy of one of the following documents to verify your eligibility:

- Registration documentation from a California county agricultural commissioner's office;
- Entrance documentation provided by a California border protection station;
- Documentation that pollination services were provided to a California farming operation, such as a contract, invoice, or the contact information (name and phone number) of the farming entity where your bees were operating.

Completed registration forms and supporting documentation may be submitted using the enclosed return envelope (no postage required) or mailed to the following address:

CDFA - Marketing Branch
560 J Street, Suite 170A
Sacramento, CA 95814-2342

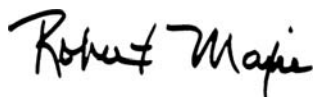
Eligible beekeepers who fail to register during this process will not be sent a referendum ballot. However, failure to register will not exempt eligible beekeepers from paying assessments to the Commission should it be implemented. All information provided to CDFA during the registration process will be kept confidential.

Registration Period:

Registration forms and accompanying verification must be postmarked or otherwise received by this office no later than **May 30, 2011**. In order for your registration materials to be accepted by CDFA, all applicable portions of the form must be completed and proper documentation must be submitted. Incomplete or unsigned registration forms will be considered invalid and will not be included in the final list of beekeepers eligible to vote in the implementation referendum.

After the registration period has ended, all registered beekeepers will be provided with additional instructions and a ballot to vote in the upcoming implementation referendum for the proposed California Apiary Research Commission. If you have any questions about this registration process or the proposed Commission, please contact Joe Monson with the Marketing Branch at 916-341-6005.

Sincerely,



Robert Maxie, Chief
Marketing Branch

Enclosures