

California Apiary Inspection and Pest Exclusion Activity Report 2024/2025 Import Season

Background

Millions of colonies of live honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) are trucked into California each year. Most honey bees are brought into the state to facilitate crop pollination – most notably almonds. Importations typically begin in September, as the weather cools in northern states and concludes by early March. At the conclusion of the pollination season in California, the bees are typically moved to other states to pollinate other crops or produce honey.

The migratory nature of beekeeping as well as the environments where bee colonies are placed (usually in orchards or pastures) places them at high risk for becoming infested with invasive pests which may hitchhike to and cause infestations in new places. In fact, of the 538 interceptions of actionable invasive species taken from commercial shipments at California Border Protection Stations (BPS) in the 2024/25 apiary import season, 131 interceptions came from bee colonies. This number, representing 24 percent of all interceptions, makes bee colonies one of the highest risk pathways for introducing invasive pests into California.

Due to the high pest introduction risk, bee colonies are subject to inspection not only prior to entering the state, but also at their destination county by the agricultural commissioners.

Data Sources and Parameters

This report analyzes inspection and pest find data pertaining to live honey bees moved into California during the 2024/2025 apiary import season (September 1, 2024 through March 15, 2025). The data used for this report was generated at California's Border Protection Stations (BPS) via the Pest Exclusion Information Management (PEIM) system including Warning Notices, Rejection Notices, and Pest Damage Reports issued. When relevant, 2023/2024 statistics are included for comparison purposes.

Importations

The data below represents all apiary shipments entering through BPS. A shipment is defined as any amount of bee colonies transported by a single truck. Total imported shipments decreased by 7.81% in the 2024/25 season as compared to the 2023/24 season.

	2023/24	2024/25	Increase/Decrease
<i>Shipments</i>	4,724	4,355	-369
<i>Colonies (Hives)*</i>	1.94M	1.79M	-151,659

*Estimate based on a historical average of 411 hives per shipment

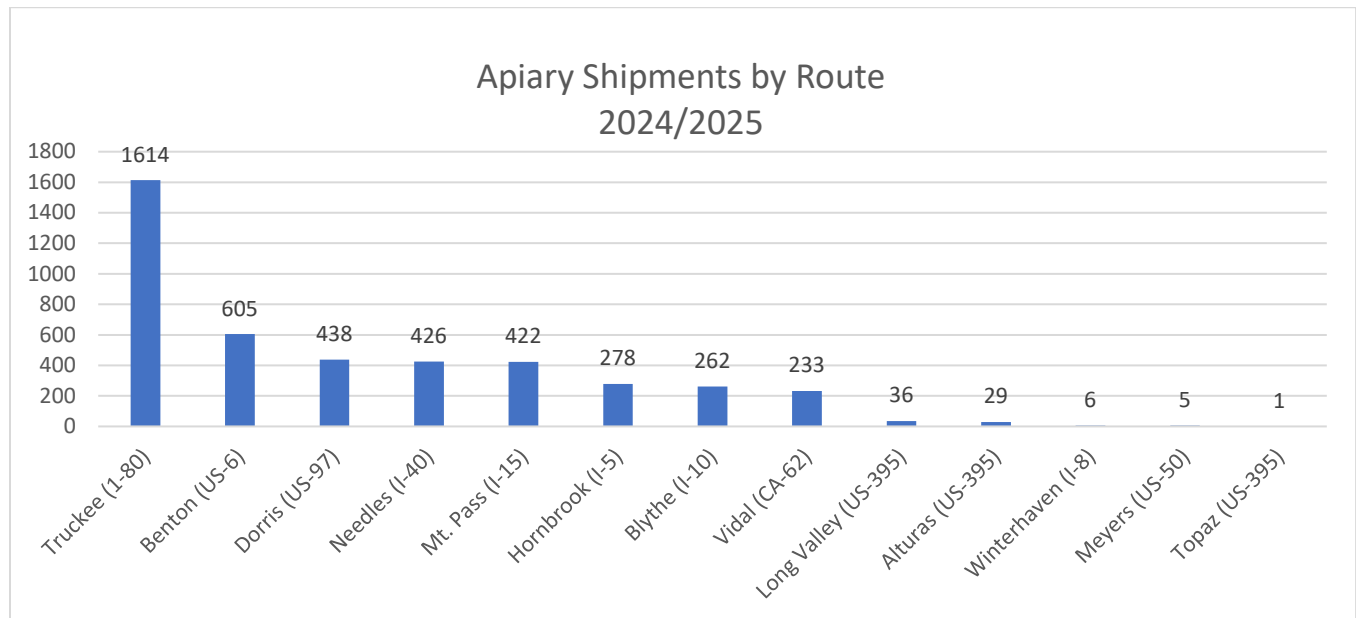
Importations by Origin

During the 2024/25 season, shipments entered through BPS from 37 states. The table below details the origins of shipments from the top 20 states. More than 37 percent of the shipments in the 2024/25 season arrived from either Idaho or North Dakota.

<i>Origin State</i>	<i>2023/24</i>	<i>2024/25</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>% Change</i>
ID	1043	1010	-33	-3.16%
ND	713	610	-103	-14.45%
FL	418	408	-10	-2.39%
OR	401	375	-26	-6.48%
WA	399	354	-45	-11.28%
SD	364	336	-28	-7.69%
MT	258	227	-31	-12.02%
TX	196	196	0	0.00%
UT	113	116	3	2.65%
MN	126	96	-30	-23.81%
GA	112	80	-32	-28.57%
CO	61	67	6	9.84%
WY	57	55	-2	-3.51%
NE	50	53	3	6.00%
NV	48	51	3	6.25%
WI	46	43	-3	-6.52%
AZ	58	42	-16	-27.59%
LA	43	46	3	6.98%
MI	48	35	-13	-27.08%
OK	46	34	-12	-26.09%
Other	124	121	-3	-2.42%
Total	4,724	4,355	-369	-7.81%

Importations by Route

During the 2024/25 season, shipments of bees entered through 13 of CDFA's 16 BPS. Consistent with past years, the Truckee BPS, located on Interstate 80, was by far the most utilized route in terms of volume – receiving 1,614 or 37% of all shipments.



Importations by Destination County

During the 2024/25 season, 4,234 shipments were released to 39 California counties. Kern County received the most shipments at 739 or 17.45% of all shipments.

<i>Destination County</i>	<i>Shipments</i>	<i>% of Shipments</i>		<i>Destination County</i>	<i>Shipments</i>	<i>% of Shipments</i>
Kern	739	17.45%		Amador	23	0.54%
Madera	677	15.99%		Calaveras	18	0.43%
Stanislaus	595	14.05%		Sutter	16	0.38%
Fresno	509	12.02%		Yuba	16	0.38%
Merced	471	11.12%		Santa Cruz	14	0.33%
San Joaquin	176	4.16%		Inyo	12	0.28%
Tulare	156	3.68%		Monterey	12	0.28%
Glenn	154	3.64%		Imperial	10	0.24%
Colusa	128	3.02%		San Benito	10	0.24%
Butte	103	2.43%		Alameda	5	0.12%
Tehama	60	1.42%		San Luis Obispo	5	0.12%
Yolo	47	1.11%		Contra Costa	4	0.09%
Santa Barbara	40	0.94%		Los Angeles	4	0.09%
Shasta	40	0.94%		Mariposa	3	0.07%
Kings	35	0.83%		Solano	3	0.07%
Ventura	34	0.80%		Tuolumne	2	0.05%
Placer	33	0.78%		Humboldt	1	0.02%
Sacramento	27	0.64%		Lake	1	0.02%
Riverside	26	0.61%		Santa Clara	1	0.02%
San Bernardino	24	0.57%		Total	4,234	100.00%

Inspections/Pest Finds

Except for shipments participating in the North Dakota, Montana, Utah and Idaho Apiary Pre-Shipment Inspection Program (see page 8), all shipments were inspected for hitchhiking pests at the BPS during the 2024/25 shipping season.

Summary of Pest Finds

The table below summarizes pest finds at all BPS. The term “pests found” equates to one or more species of viable organisms found during inspection. During the 2024/25 season, pest finds occurred on 3.01% of incoming shipments. This represents a decrease in the percentage of pest infested shipments of 0.12% as compared to the 2023/24 season.

	2023/24	2024/25	Change
<i>Shipments with No Pests Found</i>	4,576	4,224	352
<i>Shipments with Pests Found</i>	148	131	17
<i>Total Shipments</i>	4,724	4,355	369
<i>% of shipments with Pests Found</i>	3.13%	3.01%	0.12%

Disposition of Pest Infested Shipments by State

When pest organisms are found infesting a shipment, the pest is tentatively identified via digital imaging by scientists at CDFA's Plant Pest Diagnostics Lab. If the organism is identified as being state actionable (i.e., a pest being regulated by state quarantine laws), the infestation must be removed or the shipment returned out of state. The pest *Aethina tumida*, or small hive beetle (SHB), is not regulated at the state level but is of concern to certain counties. Shipments infested with SHB may be allowed into certain counties per county policy.

The table below details the disposition of all pest infested shipments for the 2024/25 season. See footnotes for additional details.

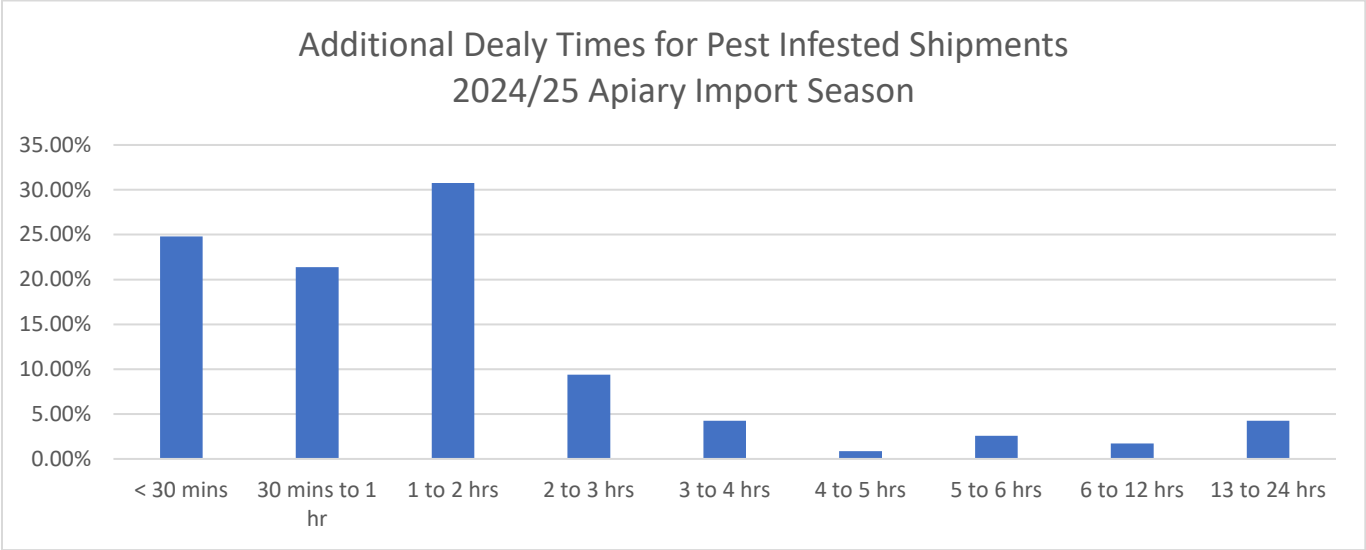
Origin State	All Rejections Due to Pest Finds	Allowed Entry				Returned Out of State ⁽⁵⁾
		Non-Actionable Pest ⁽¹⁾	SHB Accepting County ⁽²⁾	Cleaned ⁽³⁾	Ant-Free Protocol ⁽⁴⁾	
AZ	2	3	0	0	0	0
CO	3	2	1	0	0	1
FL	56	17	28	15	0	17
GA	3	1	2	1	0	0
IA	1	1	1	0	0	0
ID	3	6	0	0	0	1
IN	1	1	0	0	0	0
LA	3	2	2	0	0	0
MN	3	2	1	1	0	1
MS	3	1	0	1	0	1
MT	1	0	1	1	0	0
ND	11	7	0	0	0	6
NE	6	3	0	0	0	3
NV	1	1	0	0	0	0
OK	1	0	0	1	0	0
SC	1	0	1	0	0	0
SD	2	1	1	0	0	0
TX	13	1	3	8	0	2
UT	5	5	0	0	0	1
WI	2	2	0	1	0	1
Total	121	56	41	29	0	34

- (1) Pest identified as non-actionable. Shipment allowed entry.
- (2) Pest identified as small hive beetle and allowed entry per county policy.
- (3) Pest identified as actionable and mitigated by cleaning. Allowed entry after re-inspection.
- (4) Shipment pre-inspected under Ant-free Certification Program (see page 6 and 7), pest identified as actionable worker ants but within tolerance. Shipment allowed entry.
- (5) Pest identified as actionable and pest could not be mitigated by cleaning or driver declined to attempt to mitigate by cleaning. Shipment refused entry and returned out of state.

Delay of Pest-Infested Shipments

Shipments infested with hitchhiking pests are subject to additional delays while pests are identified and, if necessary, cleaning of the shipment is attempted. The graph below represents approximate delay times for pest infested shipments during the 2024/25 season based on time in and time out data collected on Rejection Notices.

This graph does not account for normal delays for all shipments due to inspection and given traffic flow at time of entry. On average, pest infested shipments were delayed one hour and forty-nine minutes longer than shipments with no pest finds. Most pest-infested shipments (46.15%) had an additional delay of under one hour.



Actionable Pests

A total of 131 actionable pests were intercepted on incoming shipments of bee colonies in the 2024/25 season. Because often a single shipment may be infested with more than one actionable pest, it is difficult to make a direct correlation between the number of actionable pests detected and the number of shipments inspected with currently available data. Although actionable pest finds were reduced in the 2024/25 season, the information demonstrates the continued high pest risk, both in terms of pest numbers and pest variety, presented by incoming apiary shipments.

Pest	2023/24 Occurrences	2024/25 Occurrences	Decrease or Increase
Small Hive Beetle	55	45	-10
Carpenter Ants	36	35	-1
Red Imported Fire Ant	14	16	2
Other Ants	6	16	10
Bagworm Moths	11	9	-2
Other Pests	10	8	-2
Weeds	2	2	0
Termites	0	0	0
Total	135	131	-4

Pre-Entry Certification

Apiary Pre-Shipment Inspection Program

The Apiary Pre-Shipment Inspection Program for apiary shipments began as a pilot project in North Dakota for the 2018/19 season. Under this voluntary program, bee colonies are inspected for invasive pests at origin in lieu of inspecting them at the California border. The goal of the program is to minimize delays and the risk of rejection for bee shipments entering from states that present a low pest risk, while improving safety conditions, reducing workload, and easing traffic congestion at the BPS.

As a safeguard, shipments entering under this program continue to be subject to inspection by county agricultural commissioners at destination.

After a successful partnership with North Dakota in 2018/19, the program was expanded to include Idaho in 2019/20, Montana in 2022/23 and Utah in 2023/24. As indicated by the table below, 962 shipments were inspected at origin in the 2024/25 season. This represents a 1.57% decrease from 975 shipments in the 2024/25 season. Although there is a trend of decreased participation, beekeepers still feel this program is beneficial.

State	Total Apiary Shipments	Shipments Inspected at Origin	Percent of shipments Inspected at Origin
2024/2025 Season			
Idaho	1,010	741	73.37%
North Dakota	610	135	22.13%
Montana	227	52	22.91%
Utah	116	34	29.31%
2023/2024 Season			
Idaho	1,042	745	71.50%
North Dakota	697	159	22.81%
Montana	255	57	22.35%
Utah	113	14	12.39%

Ant-Free Certification Program

There are currently 18 states eligible to participate in the Ant-free Certification Program: Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

This program differs from the Apiary Pre-Shipment Inspection Program outlined above in that shipments entering under this program are still inspected upon entry at the BPS. However, shipments certified as being “ant-free” have mitigations in place at origin to prevent introduction of ant colonies and are given the advantage of having a tolerance of up to 5 worker ants being found during BPS inspection without rejection.

In the 2024/25 shipping season, 875 shipments arrived from eligible states. Of these, 295 (33.71%) were certified by 14 of the 18 participating eligible states (no certificates were received from four eligible states). Of the shipments from participating states, pests were found on 9.66% of the non-certified shipments vs pest finds on 6.44% of the certified shipments. The table below details these statistics.

**Summary of Shipments Entering under Ant-Free Certification
2024/2025 Season**

State	Non-Certified Shipments				Certified Shipments			
	No Pests Found	Pests Found	Total Shipments	% of Pest Finds	No Pests Found	Pests Found	Total Shipments	% of Pest Finds
Arkansas	4	0	4	0.00%	8	0	8	0.00%
Florida	208	42	250	16.80%	144	14	158	8.86%
Georgia	26	2	28	7.14%	51	1	52	1.92%
Kansas	1	0	1	0.00%	1	0	1	0.00%
Louisiana	3	0	3	0.00%	40	3	43	6.98%
Maryland	2	0	2	0.00%	1	0	1	0.00%
Michigan	25	0	25	0.00%	10	0	10	0.00%
Mississippi	9	3	12	25.00%	3	0	3	0.00%
Nevada	50	1	51	1.96%	0	0	0	0.00%
N Carolina	6	0	6	0.00%	6	0	6	0.00%
Oklahoma	33	1	34	2.94%	0	0	0	0.00%
Pennsylvania	4	0	4	0.00%	2	0	2	0.00%
S Carolina	2	0	2	0.00%	6	1	7	14.29%
Tennessee	1	0	1	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Utah	111	5	116	4.31%	0	0	0	0.00%
Wisconsin	39	2	41	4.88%	2	0	2	0.00%
W Virginia	0	0	0	0.00%	2	0	2	0.00%
Total	524	56	580	9.66%	276	19	295	6.44%