

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
CALIFORNIA STATE APIARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street, Rm 220
Sacramento, CA 95814**

**February 19, 2019
10:00 AM**

The meeting of the California State Apiary Board was called to order at approximately 10:00 am, on February 19, 2019, in Sacramento, California by Board Chair Roger Everett.

Board Members Present

Roger Everett, Chair (via phone) Harold "Buzz" Landon
Bob Brandi Bryan Ashurst (via phone)

Board Members Absent

David Bradshaw

CDFA Staff Present

Nick Condos, Director Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services
Andy Cline, Assistant Director Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services
Victoria Hornbaker, Environmental Program Manager II, Integrated Pest Control
Keith Morris, Program Supervisor, Border Protection Stations
Patricia Bohls, Environmental Scientist, Bee Safe Program
Gary Leslie, Special Assistant, Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services

Presenters and Members of the Industry and Public (via phone)

Brent Ashurst, California State Beekeepers Association
Jason Beauchamp, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner, Glenn County
Sandy Elles, Executive Director California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association
Holly Fraumeni De Jesús, Lighthouse Public Affairs
Rick Gurrola, Agricultural Commissioner, Tehama County
Larry Lima, Beekeeper
Jackie Park-Burris, California State Beekeepers Association
Karli Quinn, Ag Association Management Services, Inc

Welcome and Introductions

Roger Everett welcomed the Board, staff, and members of the public participating in person and on the phone. He stated that there was a quorum for the meeting.

Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act

Victoria Hornbaker acknowledged compliance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, Pursuant to Government Code Section 11120-11132.

Public Comment

Mr. Everett asked for Public Comment before the start of the meeting.

Jackie Park-Burris asked that consideration be given to provide Bee-Safe Program funding for small hive beetle inspections in northern counties under the Bee Safe Program. Ms. Park-Burris stated these inspections are currently performed by county inspectors and paid for by beekeepers through contract with the inspecting county. Patricia Bohls acknowledged Ms. Park-Burris' request for consideration.

Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from the December 10, 2018 meeting.

Motion: Bob Brandi moved that the Board recommend approval of the December 10, 2018 Board meeting minutes without amendment. The motion was seconded by Bryan Ashurst and passed unanimously (Harold "Buzz" Landon was not present for the vote).

Apiary Board Applications

Gary Leslie informed the Board that six applications had been received by CDFA to fill the two Board seats to be vacated by Bryan Ashurst and Bob Brandi, on March 1, 2019. He stated those applicants were Brent Ashurst, Larry Lima, Robert Huckaby, Amber Hamby, Dave Moreland, and Trevor Tauzer. Mr. Leslie noted recommendations had been received from the California State Beekeepers' Association to appoint Brent Ashurst and Larry Lima and from Wonderful Farms to appoint Robert Huckaby to the positions.

Motion: Bob Brandi moved that the Board recommend the appointment of Brent Ashurst and Larry Lima to the California State Apiary Board. The motion was seconded by Bryan Ashurst and passed unanimously (Mr. Landon was not present for the vote).

Mr. Leslie confirmed, as recommended by the Board during the December 10, 2018 meeting, the other three Board positions will be vacated on March 1, 2020.

Importation of "Gentle" Africanized Honey Bees

Nick Condos informed the Board CDFA had received a letter of concern from the California State Beekeepers' Association (CSBA) regarding the importation of "gentle" Africanized honey bees (gAHB) from Puerto Rico into San Diego County. He stated although the Department shares the concerns of the CSBA, it lacks statutory and regulatory authority to prevent the importation of these bees. Mr. Condos reported the Department had learned USDA also lacks federal authority to prevent the importation of gAHB from Puerto Rico to the US mainland. A response letter, from CDFA to the CSBA, indicating CDFA's position on the matter was shared with the Board.

Noting the Food and Agricultural Code gives abatement authority to Counties for “aggressive” bee colonies, Mr. Everett inquired as to whether statutory authority exists to quarantine bee colonies until it can be determined they are non-aggressive. Mr. Condos stated he would have staff research the possibility.

After lengthy discussion by public and board members, it was generally agreed upon that more research should be done to determine the potential impacts of importing gAHB into California and other states. It was also agreed analysis of regulatory state and federal authorities should be done to identify address gaps in apiary importation laws and develop solutions to address those gaps. Mr. Condos stated CDFA staff would continue to research USDA and other states’ statutory and regulatory authorities applicable to bee importation and handling aggressive bees. When this information is obtained, CDFA will provide it to the Board.

Bryan Ashurst suggested that the CSBA reach out to the researchers planning to import the gAHB to make them aware of the beekeeping industry’s concerns and suggest that collaborative research be done before moving forward with bringing gAHB into California. Nick Condos agreed this was a good path forward. Bryan Ashurst asked if the Apiary Board could send such a letter to the researchers. Nick Condos said CDFA could send a letter on behalf of the Board, paraphrasing the language in the Secretary’s letter of response to the CSBA.

Victoria Hornbaker asked if a letter had been sent from the CSBA directly to the researchers. Bryan Ashurst said he did not believe that had been done. Roger Everett said, if such a letter had not been sent, the CSBA should be requested to send one.

Motion: Harold “Buzz” Landon moved that the Board recommend CDFA issue a letter, on behalf of the Board, to the researchers proposing to import “gentle” Africanized Honeybees into California stating CDFA’s position regarding matter. The motion was seconded by Bryan Ashurst and it passed unanimously.

Border Station Update and Pilot Programs

Keith Morris provided a statistical update on apiary shipments moved into California through the border stations, comparing the 2018-19 season to the 2017-18 season (September through February each year). Through February 12, 2019, 4,326 shipments of bee colonies had arrived and been inspected for pests at the border stations. Of these shipments, no pests were found on 4,121 shipments and 205 were rejected because of potential pests finds. The percentage of total of pest infested shipments is down, from 7.20% in 2017-18, to 4.74% in 2018-19. Mr. Morris believes the drop can be attributed to outreach efforts resulting in beekeepers being more diligent in ensuring bee colonies are pest free before shipment to California.

Mr. Morris relayed statistical data regarding shipments that entered through the border stations under the North Dakota Pre-inspection Pilot Program. Through February 12, 2019, 91 shipments had passed through the stations. In total eleven shippers participated in the program. Of the eleven, ten shippers had sent through all pre-cleared colonies. As of February 12, 2019, one shipper still had approximately 1,600 hives that were pre-inspected, but had not yet entered California.

Nick Condos advised the Board of a potential future pilot program which is in the conceptual phase. Under this program, bee colonies from southern states might be inspected at a station in a yet undetermined location outside California. Ideally, this station would be staffed by inspectors from California and other states and have an on-site reconditioning facility to handle pest infested shipments. Entry through the station would be voluntary for apiary shipments, but shipments pre-inspected there would not be further inspected when arriving at the California border. Mr. Condos advised other entities such as the CSBA, Almond Board, and Plant Health Directors in other states had been contacted and expressed interest in exploring the possibilities for such a program. He asked the Board if there was interest in forming a task force to flush out further details.

Mr. Everett stated he felt it was an idea worth exploring. He asked if the reconditioning at the facility would be handled by the state inspectors at the facility or by a private entity. Mr. Condos said cleaning would be done by one or more private entities with oversight by the state inspectors (similar to what is currently taking place at Needles).

Motion: Bob Brandi motioned to recommend a task force be formed to explore the concept of establishing an inspection station outside California to inspect and clean apiary shipments from southern states before arrival at the California Border and Roger Everett would serve as Board representative on the Task Force. Mr. Landon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Everett asked Mr. Morris if he was aware of any issues regarding the availability of water for bees at all border stations. Mr. Everett said one beekeeper had complained to him about issues with water at the Needles Station. Mr. Morris said he was not aware of any problems with water at Needles or other stations – to his knowledge water was available for bees at all stations. Mr. Morris said he would verify and report back to the Board.

Bob Brandi, voiced the opinion that in the future the North Dakota Pilot Program should allow for bees to be moved into Idaho and then reshipped into California. Jackie Park-Burris voiced the opinion the pilot program should be expanded to Idaho.

Jackie-Park Burris expressed gratitude to CDFA staff for recent efforts made to improve apiary inspection processes at the border stations. She said she had talked to several brokers who reported things are much better currently than in the past years.

Nick Condos expressed a willingness on CDFA's part to expand the pilot program to Idaho and other northern states, with the eventual goal of turning over the inspection duties to inspectors in the origin states rather than having CDFA staff travel there.

Comment on Items not on the Agenda

Sandy Elles, announced the Bee-Ware Program, a tool for beekeepers to easily register bees as required by law, is now up and running. Mr. Everett expressed the opinion that, because the

program was delayed in being rolled out, beekeepers should be granted a grace period before counties begin registration enforcement. Rick Gurrola pointed out the Bee-Ware program does not represent a change in law – the registration requirement has been in place for many years – it is simply a tool to make it easier for bee keepers to register their bees. Mr. Everett said he understood that the law had not changed, but the enforcement of it will and, as such it will seem new to many beekeepers. Mr. Gurrola acknowledged Mr. Everett’s point and stated beekeepers with concerns should contact their local Agricultural Commissioner to see how enforcement will be carried out in individual counties.

After additional discussion it was agreed continued outreach to beekeepers, regarding California apiary registration requirements, are needed and that the California Agricultural and Commissioners and Sealers Association (CACASA) should make agricultural commissioners aware of industry concerns regarding enforcement rollout. Mr. Gurrola said the topic would be agendaized for the at the next meeting of CACASA’s Nursery Seed and Apiary Committee.

Next meeting

It was decided that the Board would postpone scheduling their next meeting.

Adjourn

Bob Brandi moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Landon seconded. Motion to adjourn was unanimously passed at approximately 11:40 AM.