

# ARKANSAS APIARY NEWSLETTER

State Plant Board - Apiary Section

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## What's New with Arkansas' Africanized Bees?

As the last newsletter stated, Africanized Honeybees have arrived in our state. The apiary section of the State Plant Board has been very busy with this situation. Since the last newsletter, we have had a couple more positive finds in Miller County and have still more samples pending determination at the laboratories. We are checking the area weekly, running our traps and following up on calls that sound suspicious. We have moved most of our traps out of Miller County and have put more traps in the adjacent counties. While all this is time consuming, it is just part of what we are doing in this arena.

Starting in the '90's the Plant Board organized an Interagency Africanized Honeybee Action Committee. The Action Committee prepared an action plan that lays out the obligations of several groups and agencies and procedures that are being followed now that the Africanized Bees are here. While many agencies and organizations are doing a lot of work, because of our mission and expertise, our agency has carried out the bulk of the jobs. We are actively educating the public and beekeepers, training emergency management teams and first responders, training pest control operators, working with state and county cooperative extension personnel and dealing with the media. Our end goals include slowing the spread while doing our best to maximize public safety. At the same time, while it's important for people to understand the dangers, we don't want to create undue alarm.

Working with the extension service we have completed a DVD training video for "Controlling Honeybee Emergencies". We have nearly completed a CD that includes training and educational information. We are about ready to be on-line with a website about "Africanized Bees in Arkansas." At the same time we are putting together a CD that will have various PowerPoint programs for use for education and training and will be distributed to involved agencies and groups.

### Arkansas' Website on Africanized Honeybees

The web site will be reachable through the Arkansas State Plant Board site at [www.aspb.arkansas.gov](http://www.aspb.arkansas.gov) and will be linked from many other agencies' and related sites. It will have educational materials and printable brochures about Africanized Honeybees, etc. This page will also include a map that will have updates of affected counties. It will also have links to other relevant sites.

### Quarantine Protocols relative to Africanized Honeybees (AHB)

As explained in the previous newsletter, AHBs can spread by various means. While we can't effectively control their natural spread, we can work to not facilitate the process. To minimize their spread there are certain precautions that must be followed. It would be counter-productive to move bees from either a county that has been declared "Africanized" or one that is in an AHB risk zone that are not certified as European. It is also dangerous and counter-productive to catch honeybee swarms in areas that are "Africanized" or in a risk zone.

### **Moving Bees**

Since we cannot see the difference between European Honeybees and Africanized Honeybees and since AHB colonies demonstrate erratic behavior (sometimes calm and sometimes overly defensive), we can't always know what we've got in the AHB zones. Keeping potentially Africanized bees that have not yet shown their defensive traits will allow them to spread their genetics to other colonies through breeding and invasions. It shall therefore be unlawful for beekeepers to move bees from AHB risk zones to areas out of those zones without European Certification. This will affect any movements within the state, into the state, or to other states that may have the same rules. Beekeepers wanting European Certification for the purpose of moving out of an Africanized County or an Africanized Risk Zone will be required to pay for the certification process.

### **Catching Swarms**

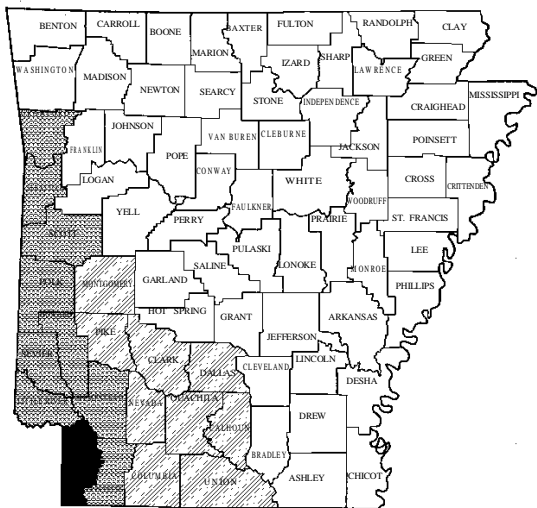
As we all know, swarms are almost always quite calm. There are two reasons for this; they are gorged with honey and they have nothing to defend. It is virtually impossible to judge the genetics of a swarm before it has comb and brood or without laboratory analysis. For this reason catching swarms in Africanized risk zones will not be allowed. Not only is there risk that you might be sorry later when the swarm becomes a defensive colony once established, there is another, not so obvious risk. If the swarm does have some African genes, it will be producing drones and bees that will not only demonstrate those genetic traits, but it will be passing those genes on to other colonies through the drones. This will clearly speed up the "africanization" process.

There is one other factor that adds to the danger, and therefore, the ruling against catching swarms in AHB risk zones. Africanized Honeybee swarms will move into established apiaries and invade European colonies. They first present themselves as a nearby swarm that a beekeeper could easily mistake for being a swarm from one of his "kept" colonies.

### **Defining Africanized Counties and Risk Zones**

The Plant Board will keep beekeepers aware of confirmed Africanized Honeybees as they reach new areas or spread from their current positions. This will be done through the newsletter and the website. A find in a county does not mean that that county is Africanized but indicates that there has merely been a find in that county. Once a county has Africanized Honeybees in two distinct areas of the county, it will be declared an Africanized county. Most counties have relatively major highways that dissect the county both north and south as well as east and west. A county will be declared "Africanized" when Africanized bees have been confirmed in two of the quarters as delineated by the dissecting highways.

Counties that are adjacent to a county where AHBs have been found as well as counties that are in imminent danger of having Africanized bees arriving soon, while not considered "Africanized", will be considered in a AHB Risk Zone. Catching swarms and the movement of bees from either of these zones will be restricted as described above.



Dark county = Africanized

Medium color = close watch

All shading = AHB Risk Zones

**Update on the Status for Control Products  
for Varroa and Beetles**

**CheckMite+**® or Coumaphos has just recently been authorized in Arkansas under the Section 18 status. Delays for this authorization were due to holdups at several levels but it's available now. It may be used, as per label instructions for the control of both the Varroa mite and the Small Hive Beetle. Reports must be filed with our office anytime it is used as we are required to report all usage to the EPA. Beekeepers can use the sample report below or their own form with all the same information. These reports must be filed with our office within ten days of use.

**MiteAwayII**® is a product of NOD Apiaries Products. Its a prepackaged formic acid pad product that is now approved under a full Section 3 registration. That means it can be used as per label instructions for the control of Varroa mites without filing any paperwork. Information on this product is available at [www.miteaway.com](http://www.miteaway.com)

**ApiLife Var**® has applied for a Section 18 status like that of CheckMite+ but the process has not been completed. This is a thymol-based product. We are currently waiting for word from EPA.

Remember, mites are not succumbing to the "classic" treatments as well as they did back before they became resistant to Apistan® and CheckMite+. Beekeepers would do well to alternate between products and use other Integrated Pest Management tools.

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Form: Report of Section 18 Application

## **AFRICANIZED BEES IN THREE OF OUR NEIGHBORING STATES**

Texas, of course, has Africanized Honeybees. In fact, they have been dealing with them since October of 1990 when they entered the U.S. from the south. Mostly they stayed in the river valley and worked their way north and west. Since much of the state is now Africanized, Texas officials have stopped trapping and declaring counties as Africanized and have stopped quarantining counties. Now they certify bee operations as being certified European by request.

Oklahoma first became aware of having Africanized Honeybees in August of 2004 when some workers at a construction site were stung. Since that time they've instigated an aggressive trapping program and now show 22 counties as being Africanized.

Louisiana caught their first Africanized swarm in June of this year. The genetics of the swarm were not confirmed until late in July. This find was in the parish just south of Miller County, Arkansas.

Our other neighbors have not found any established Africanized Honeybee swarms or colonies at this time.