

# **Southeast Regional Best Management Practices for Maintaining European Honey Bee Colonies**

**(Memorandum of Understanding among the  
States of AL, FL, GA and MS)**

This is an agreement between participating states in the Southeastern United States (U.S.) for the purpose of setting provisions to establish uniform management practices to ensure production of manageable European honey bees (EHB), facilitate interstate movement of honey bees for pollination purposes, and to ensure the production and sale of manageable EHB stock. Such are intended for inclusion in state action plans for dealing with the Africanized honey bee (AHB).

This is a voluntary program designed to minimize the threat of aggressive, defensive Africanized honey bees in the Southeastern U.S., assist in the certification of European honey bees produced in the Southeastern U.S. and to dilute any feral AHB populations that may become established in managed colonies which are the best line of defense against the Africanized honey bee.

## **Provisions to Establish Uniform Management Practices for European Honey Bees**

1. An apiary may be deemed as EHB with a survey of colonies using Fast African Honey Bee Identification System (FABIS) and/or the computer- assisted morphometric procedure (i.e., universal system for detection of AHB or other approved methods on an annual basis by a state regulatory agency).
2. Honey bee colony divisions or splits should be queened with production queens or queen cells from EHB breeder queens following Southeast Regional Best Management Practices.
3. Beekeepers are discouraged from collecting swarms that are not from identifiable sources.
4. Beekeepers should practice good swarm prevention techniques.
5. EHB colonies should be maintained in a strong, healthy, populous condition to discourage usurpation/take over by swarms of AHB.
6. Weak or empty colonies should not be allowed to exist in an apiary, as they may be attractive to AHB swarms.
7. European stock should be re-queened annually, unless marked queens are present.
8. European stock should be re-queened immediately if previously installed or marked European queen is found missing.
9. One European drone source colony should be maintained for every 10 colonies in order to reduce supercedure queens mating with AHB drones. A drone source is defined as a colony specifically maintained with 3 to 5 frames of 90% drone comb.

10. To prevent potential interaction with AHB, do not site apiaries in proximity of tethered or confined animals, students, the elderly, general public, or visitors where interaction with bees have a higher likelihood of occurring.
11. Honey bees must be treated with respect.
12. This is a voluntary program designed to minimize the threat of aggressive, defensive AHB in the South and to dilute any feral AHB populations that may become established in managed colonies which are the best line of defense against AHB.
13. Beekeepers participating in this program must sign a compliance agreement with their respective State Department of Agriculture - Apiary Protection Unit.
14. Queen Breeders are required to conform to state apiary regulations.
15. Each state will determine fees or charges for AHB Best Management Practices Certification.

### **Provisions for Producing European Honey Bee Queens and Packages**

#### **1. Mating and Mating Yards:**

- A. Drones. A minimum of 60 European drone source colony equivalents must be established for each 1000 or more mating nuclei. If colonies are divided, the European drone source equivalent of 60 European drone source colonies will still be required for each 1000 or more nuclei (6%).

Seventy-five percent of European drones source colony equivalents shall be located within a ¼ mile radius of each mating nuclei yard, and the remaining twenty-five percent shall be located within one mile of the mating yard. No drone or drone brood may be introduced into colonies or mating nuclei unless they originate from colonies with European queens from certified sources.

- B. Queens and re-queening. Producers of breeder queens and production queens are required to re-queen drone producing colonies with EHB production queens on an annual basis, unless a marked queen is present. Queens used in drone colonies may also be EHB queens produced from an outside source, but must be certified EHB by a test of progeny worker bees using approved identification techniques.
2. Breeder queens and European drone source colonies must be headed by EHB queens.
  3. Collected honey bee drone semen shall originate only from drones produced by EHB queens.
  4. Participating producers must sample their colonies according to the SEBMP Sampling protocols.

5. Participating producers must agree to the stipulations listed above in order to be certified under this memorandum of understanding.
6. Participating producers may also be certified under this agreement if the mating nuclei yard is at least 100 miles from a verified Africanized honey bee infestation.
7. Participating producers agree to requeen all colonies whose test results are greater than 50% AHB hybridization probability based on FABIS or other approved testing methods.
8. Queen and package producers participating in this program must sign a compliance agreement agreeing to these provisions.
9. Treat all honey bees with respect.