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Ministry of Agriculture

Province celebrates Day of the Honey Bee with support for bee health research

VICTORIA – The front lawns of the Parliament Buildings were a-buzz today, as honey bees and other native pollinators were feted for their critical role in B.C.'s sustainable food system.

May 29, 2018, is Day of the Honey Bee. It celebrates bees as crop pollinators and honey producers, and raises awareness around the current plight of bee health within the province, and globally.

Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, was joined by representatives of the BC Honey Producers Association, the Capital Region Beekeepers Association, Feed the Bees, and members from 4-H British Columbia. Popham announced BeeBC, a \$100,000 funding program that supports community-based research on bee health.

“On Day of the Honey Bee, we gather together to celebrate these amazing creatures that do so much for our quality of life here in B.C., whether they’re pollinating crops for our agricultural sector or providing B.C. honey to British Columbians,” said Popham. “Our government is taking the added step of supporting a growing, thriving B.C. bee community, by funding the BeeBC community research program, to help address concerns around bee health, and develop a larger provincial population of honey bees and native pollinators.”

The BeeBC program will provide funding to smaller-scale community-based projects that support the health of B.C.'s bees. Delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation, the fund will provide up to \$100,000 over two years to support small-scale regional or community-based projects to research, explore, field-test and share information about best management practices associated with bee health.

“The beekeeping industry of B.C. appreciates the growth in interest in bees and small-scale beekeeping throughout British Columbia. We express our appreciation to Minister Lana Popham for recognizing the Day of the Honey Bee, and for the support of the Ministry of Agriculture in enabling the BC Honey Producers Association to continue to support and improve the beekeeping industry,” said Kerry Clark, president of the BC Honey Producers Association. “Bees are still having a hard time, and with our partners, this funding will be put to good use in projects to research, field-test and share information about best management practices associated with bee health. We will work to support community beekeeping, to meet the needs of so many crops for pollination, and to supply the growing demand for authentic local honey.”

The government has increased support for the honey bee industry since summer 2017. Late last year, the Province signed on as a co-sponsor of a study to find solutions to the bee health problems of honeybee colonies involved in pollination, with a contribution of \$25,000 to

support that research. Last week, two new inspectors were added to the provincial apiculture team. The new inspectors were appointed to the northwest region of the province, covering the McBride-Prince George-Vanderhoof and Telkwa-Smithers-Terrace regions.

Honey bees play an important part of B.C.'s agriculture sector as pollinators of crops, contributing an estimated \$538 million to the economy in the province. Across Canada, they have an economic contribution estimated at over \$3.2 billion.

Learn More:

To find out more about the BC Honey Producers Association, check out:

<http://bchoneyproducers.ca/>

To get more information about Feed the Bees, go to: <http://www.earthwisesociety.bc.ca/>

To learn more about Capital Region Beekeepers Association, see:

<http://capitalregionbeekeepers.ca/>

For information about Ministry of Agriculture's Apiary program:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/animal-production/bees>

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