
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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May 29, 2019

Ministry of Agriculture

B.C. celebrates Day of the Honey Bee

VICTORIA – The spotlight was on the province’s honeybees and other native pollinators at the Parliament Buildings, as May 29, 2019, was proclaimed the official Day of the Honey Bee in British Columbia.

Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, was joined on the steps of the Parliament Buildings by representatives of the BC Honey Producers Association, Capital Region Beekeepers Association and Worker Bee Honey Company. She announced that the Bee BC program will receive up to \$100,000 a year over the next three years to support community-based research on bee health.

“The beekeeping community in the province plays an important role in the daily lives of every British Columbian in B.C.,” said Popham. “They contribute to our amazing agricultural industry by pollinating crops and produce delicious locally produced honey that British Columbians can trust. Bee health is important to our government, which is why we’re increasing funding to Bee BC to support community-based research projects, to help support future generations of honeybees and other native pollinators.”

The topics of honey bee and pollinator health were discussed. Peter Awram of the Worker Bee Honey Company spoke about his work developing a B.C. honey purity database. The BC Honey Producers Association was onsite with manual extractors and observation hives to help educate visitors about how honeybees work and how honey is harvested from hives.

“We appreciate all the help and support from the ministry and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC for helping ensure that honey, the only truly natural sweetener, stays pure,” said Awram. “We are going to make sure that B.C. honey stays being the highest quality honey in the world.”

Since 2017, the Province and the Investment Agriculture Foundation have provided \$150,000 to Bee BC. The program is delivered by the foundation and supports small-scale regional or community-based projects to research, explore, field test and share information about best management practices associated with bee health.

“The beekeepers of B.C. truly appreciate the support from Minister Popham and the people of B.C. through the Ministry of Agriculture,” said Kerry Clark, president, BC Honey Producers Association. “Our beekeepers’ association will continue to work hard to try to enable our piece of the bee world to improve.”

Bee BC funding is helping British Columbians get active and inspired to save the province’s bees and pollinators. To date, 29 projects have been funded through the program. The third round of projects just began, with close to \$27,000 allotted to the six projects underway.

The government has also increased support for the honey bee industry since taking office in 2017. Late last year, the province signed on as a co-sponsor of a study to find solutions to the bee-health problems of honey bee colonies involved in pollination, contributing \$50,000 to support that research.

B.C. beekeepers will also be well represented at the 46th Apimondia International Apicultural Congress taking place in Montreal in fall 2019, thanks in part to a contribution of \$20,000 in provincial support to send representatives of B.C.'s beekeeping industry.

The five-day event, themed "working together within agriculture, Canada's answer to sustainable beekeeping," will focus on the relationships between farmers and beekeepers. It will also focus on honey purity and the issues that are challenging the honey sector, such as global climate change and the implementation of new technologies.

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

Learn More:

Bee BC: <https://iafbc.ca/bee-bc/>

BC Honey Producers Association: <http://bchoneyproducers.ca/>

Worker Honey Bee Company: <http://www.workerbeehoney.ca/>

46th Apimondia International Apicultural Congress: <https://www.apimondia2019.com/>

For information about the Ministry of Agriculture's Apiary program, visit:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/animal-production/bees>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Bee BC supported projects

Green Bee Honey, Darwyn Moffaatt-Mallett, Bowen Island:

\$5,000 to purchase insemination equipment to help the Bowen Island breeding project, in collaboration with the University of British Columbia. Local beekeepers will be trained to use the equipment. The objective is to test the performance of instrumentally inseminated queens in different wintering configurations including regular, nucleus and 'bank' colonies. The most successful queens will be made available to local beekeepers.

Smithers Beekeeping Association, Smithers:

\$5,000 to research pollen sources and consult with the District Agriculturalist, Pollinator Partnership Canada, Xeres and other beekeeping associations to determine appropriate and varied forage sources for honeybees and other pollinators. The project includes planting flowering trees and ground cover or other suitable plants to widen the variety and feeding season in the area.

Cariboo Apiaries, Lillooet:

\$4,110 to study bee health. Pollen traps will be set and monitored from the beginning of June until August to indicate when pollen forage is most abundant and which pollen bees prefer to collect. The pollen will be dried and prepared to be fed back to hives in early October. A control group will be fed regular pollen substitutes, and pathogen levels between the two hives will be monitored.

Elizabeth Huxter, Grand Forks-Boundary:

\$4,770 to plant a variety of sunflower and buckwheat to enhance nectar and pollen sources for bees at critical times of the year to enhance winter survival and bee performance.

Chilliwack Beekeepers Community:

\$3,285 to provide educational and awareness opportunities in the community, including elementary and secondary schools in the district. This includes school field days and city-endorsed educational events.

Peace River Beekeepers Association, Dawson Creek:

\$4,727 to demonstrate how beekeepers in the region could more accurately adjust their existing management to take better advantage of the forage available and achieve healthier colonies, resulting in better survival and higher yield. This includes the purchase of bee health monitoring equipment.

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