
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

2021AFF0001-000020

Jan. 8, 2021

Latest funding to benefit bee health in B.C.

VICTORIA – There is a buzz in the air as a new round of Bee BC funding opens soon to support more community projects aimed at protecting the health and habitat of bees.

“Bees play a role in the everyday life of British Columbians and a vital role in our agricultural industry,” said Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. “Farmers rely on bees to pollinate their crops and consumers rely on farmers to put fresh produce on their plates, so the work B.C. beekeepers do to keep our bee populations healthy is important to all citizens. By supporting these projects, we are helping future generations of bees and ensuring food security in B.C.”

Beekeepers, beekeeping associations and regional and community-based organizations can apply for funding starting Monday, Jan. 11, 2021. Each project is eligible to receive up to \$5,000 to fund projects enhancing bee health throughout the province.

Projects can range from providing education in communities to planting bee-specific forage to using innovation and technology to help protect and ensure bee health in B.C. The last round of projects included:

- educational programs for schools in the Kootenays and surrounding areas to teach the life cycle of the honey bee, the importance of pollination and the importance of bees and other pollinators on the larger ecosystem;
- testing the effectiveness of a seaweed extract supplement to help increase hive size and reduce disease levels among blueberry pollinator bees on the south coast; and
- mass planting nectar trees and other perennial bee flowers to help increase local nectar forage during the summer on the Gulf Islands.

A new bee-health website has also been launched as an online resource, featuring best practices and lessons learned from completed projects under the Bee BC program:

<http://bcbeehealth.ca/>

The Bee BC program provides funding to smaller-scale, community-based projects that support the health of bees in the province. Funding provides support to research, explore, field test and share information about best management practices associated with bee health. The program is administered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

Learn More:

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

Check out the program guide: <https://iafbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Bee-BC-Program-Guidelines-2020-formatted.pdf>

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

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BACKGROUNDER

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Facts about bees in B.C.

- Since launching in 2018, Bee BC has contributed almost \$280,000 to 62 projects through five rounds of funding.
- The last round allotted almost \$100,000 for 24 projects.
- Bee BC is a four-year, \$400,000 provincial program investing in bee health each fiscal year.
- May 29, 2020, was proclaimed Day of the Honey Bee in B.C.
- As crop pollinators and honey producers, honey bees and native pollinators have a critical role in B.C.'s sustainable food system, contributing an estimated \$538 million to the provincial economy.
- In 2019, bees in B.C. produced more than 1,770 kilograms of honey, a 24% increase from 2018.
- There were 55,781 colonies in the province, and more than a quarter of Canada's beekeepers reside in B.C.

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