

Oregon State Legislature 215 Regular Session

House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

Public Hearing 3/19/2015 8:00 AM, HR D

House Bill 3360

The estimated 70,000 commercially managed honey bee hives in Oregon, pollinate more than 90 agricultural crops annually, with a market value exceeding 500 million dollars. In some crops, placement of hives for pollination improves the yield per acre such as pumpkins or blueberries. In other crops hive placements for pollination is essential in order to have any measure of crop production. Specialty seed production in the desert; no bees, no crop. 780,000 acres of almonds in California; no bees; no crop. And there are many others.

Oregon commercial beekeepers work very hard, all year long to maintain strong, healthy honey bee hives for pollination of these crops. It is very hard work and isn't getting any easier.

In the 2014 OSU Pollination Survey, sideline and commercial beekeepers reported an average expense of approximately \$200.00 per colony expenses in order to maintain strong, healthy hives. For a beekeeping operation of 2500 hives that equates to \$500,000.00 of annual expenses just to maintain those hives. And remember, that's only 2500 hives. Oregon has many commercial beekeeping operations MUCH larger than that.

Beekeeping on any scale, delivers to the beekeeper, non-stop, ever changing challenges regarding pests and diseases that they must contend with. Becoming a *successful* beekeeper requires constant education and the ability to quickly recognize and correct the myriad of parasites, fungal and bacterial infections, virus's in their many forms, and the list goes on and on.

Because the problems are forever unmasking and unfolding; where does a beekeeper go when something new shows up? You do not call a veterinarian for honeybees.

Fortunately for Oregon Beekeepers, we have one of the finest Honey Bee Entomologists and Honey Bee Researchers in the world; Dr. Ramesh Sagili. We are very, very grateful for him.

Unfortunately the tools at his disposal are very limited. Much critical analysis cannot be conducted at OSU and in fact, must be sent to the east coast or beyond for answers. This is a travesty. We have in Oregon, everything we need. We have the crops, the bees, the beekeepers, and an excellent scientist.

The Oregon State Beekeepers Association is here today to ask this committee, and the 78th Oregon Legislative Assembly to appropriate funding for Oregon State University for the purpose of developing a state-of-the-art bee health diagnostic facility at the Honey Bee Lab at OSU. We urge you to pass House Bill 3360.

I'm happy to take questions.

Thank you.

Harry Vanderpool, Oregon State Beekeepers Association Vice President.

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