Tell Your Congressional Delegation to Support the Food and Farm Act!  *From Beyond Pesticides*

As we approach 2018, Congress is working on the next Farm Bill, which will determine how $956 billion of our tax money will be spent over the coming years in shaping our food system. This year, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) has introduced a bill (https://blumenauer.house.gov/sites/blumenauer.house.gov/files/The%20Food%20and%20Farm%20Act.pdf) that, if passed, will implement many of the food policy reforms that sustainable agriculture policy advocates have long supported.

>> **Tell Your Congressional Delegation to Support the Food and Farm Act!**

The bill, which is co-sponsored by Reps. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Chellie Pingree (D-ME) and Don Beyer (D-VA), is a result of a two-year conversation, “Sing Your Own Farm Bill,” in which the U.S. Representative engaged a diverse group of farmers, ranchers, fiscal hawks, food and agriculture policy experts, environmentalists, animal welfare advocates, and others to brainstorm ideas for shaping future farm and food policy.

According to Farm Forward, (https://farmforward.com/2016/03/02/factory-farming-is-bad-for-investors-too/ ) factory farms receive approximately $4 billion in annual benefits under the current Farm Bill – which result in many negative impacts, such as:

- **Diet-Related Disease** – A diet high in food commodities subsidized by the Farm Bill is linked to a greater probability of diabetes, heart disease and stroke.
- **Climate Change** – The top five factory-farm mega-corporations combined emit more greenhouse gases (GHGs) than Exxon, or Shell, or BP (formerly British Petroleum).
- **Water Pollution** – Farm Bill subsidy programs contribute to the pollution of drinking water, imposing billions of dollars in healthcare and water cleanup costs on downstream communities.

**Highlights of Rep. Blumenauer’s Food and Farm Act include:**

**Title I: Commodities and Crop Insurance**
Title I cuts, caps, and clarifies the farm subsidy programs available in the commodity, conservation, and crop insurance titles of the Farm Bill. It expands coverage for non-commodity farms and ensures that farmers who receive subsidies reduce their environmental impact.
Title II: Conservation
Title II reforms existing conservation programs to focus on performance by distributing resources based on how effectively a project achieves conservation goals and minimizing the environmental impact of agriculture practices.

Title III: Food Assistance
Allows more flexibility in determining what food aid works best for each situation, providing USAID’s implementing partners the ability to use either U.S. commodities or local and regional procurement as they see fit, while eliminating the process by which 15% of non-emergency donated food is sold in local food markets, disrupting local food prices.

Title IV: Nutrition
Title IV expands access to healthy food in schools and underserved areas and at farmers markets through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other initiatives.

Title V: Future of American Farmers
Title V provides support for beginning farmers and ranchers to enter and stay in the agriculture sector. It also assists those in the business who are ready to retire by helping them transition out of farming while keeping the industry vibrant.

Title VI: Food Waste
Title VI establishes the first Food Waste Title of the Farm Bill, which focuses the federal government on food waste reduction and directs USDA to develop methods for measuring, aggregating, and disseminating food waste information to the public.

Title VII: Research, Extension, and Related Matters
Title VII invests in research and education programs that improve sustainable agriculture practices, while also supporting research to help farmers and ranchers succeed in a changing climate.

Title VIII: Animal Welfare
Title VIII establishes the first Animal Welfare Title in the Farm Bill, incorporating reforms to ensure that the treatment of animals is a central part of the country’s food and agriculture policy.

Title IX: Regional Food Systems
Title IX invests in existing programs and creates new ones to support vibrant local and regional food systems, increases transparency within USDA’s existing programs, and streamlines grant program application procedures to make them more accessible.

“Beekeepers and honeybees have gained societal and commercial relevance in the context of the rise of a chemically intensive form of large-scale industrial agriculture.”

pg. 71

www.pollinatorstewardship.org

>> Tell Your Congressional Delegation to Support the Food and Farm Act!
(https://action.beyondpesticides.org/p/dia/action4/common/public/?action_KEY=25610)
Take Action: Oppose Legislation Weakening Endangered Species Protection from Pesticides

(Beyond Pesticides, November 20, 2017) The pesticide industry is drafting legislation that threatens to remove provisions of the Endangered Species Act that protect species from pesticides.

Tell your Congressional delegation to oppose all efforts to reduce endangered species protections from pesticides.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is one of America’s most effective and important environmental laws. It represents a commitment to protect and restore those species most at risk of extinction. Recent polling shows 84 percent of Americans support the Endangered Species Act, and 87 percent agree that it is a successful safety net for protecting wildlife, plants, insects, and fish from extinction. Although many species—including the bald eagle, Florida manatee, and California condor—have been protected and brought back from the brink of extinction under the ESA, an estimated 500 species have disappeared in the past 200 years.

An important provision of the ESA is the requirement that each federal agency that proposes to authorize, fund, or carry out an action that may affect a listed species or its critical habitat must consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service. In the case of pesticides, EPA is required to perform such a consultation if it finds that the pesticide may affect endangered species, and the Services may initiate such a consultation if they disagree with EPA’s assessment. In addition, citizens may file lawsuits to ensure that species are adequately protected. These consultation provisions are under attack by pesticide industry lobbyists promoting legislation allowing EPA to “self-consult” on pesticide registrations.

At least 59 legislative attacks on the ESA have been introduced in Congress this year. The pesticide industry proposed legislation strikes against ESA protections of plants and animals from pesticides. See industry’s draft legislation. It seeks to severely curtail the ESA’s Section 7 consultation provisions from pesticide reviews and eliminate all liability under Section 9 of the ESA, which prohibits the take injury, death, or harm of endangered animals.

Tell your Congressional delegation to oppose all efforts to reduce endangered species protections from pesticides. (http://action.beyondpesticides.org/p/dia/action4/common/public/?action_KEY=25576)
New Bee Club Leaders: Making Your Mark

It is the end of one year and soon the beginning of a new one, and beekeeping associations may be transitioning leaders. New leaders bring new ideas, new experiences with organizational management and service to members that can refresh a local, state, or national beekeeping association. The “brave and hardy souls” leading the county, state, regional, and national beekeeping associations want to ensure healthy, strong, and sustainable beekeeping organizations across the U.S. Club leaders want to learn from their predecessors, yet put their own mark on the organization. Continuity of leadership is good for history and context of what works and what does not. Leaders need to be forward looking, creative, passionate about the mission, enthusiastic, mature, honest, and competent. Leaders want their fellow board members input, ideas, and volunteer time and energy. Being on the board of a beekeeping association is a collaboration solely focused upon fulfilling the mission of the bee club.

Volunteer boards struggle and falter because of misconceptions of board responsibilities and tasks. Bee clubs implode because of personal agendas, and self-serving interests of board members. Key to a successful board is agreement of the goals of all of the board members, the time commitment to the club, and respect for each other, the mission of the organization, and most importantly the service to the membership.

How to make the transition from the “old board” to the “new board”

The exiting board president and newly elected board president will set the tone for camaraderie, respect, support, commitment, ethics, and responsibility. It is important for each officer to meet with their incoming/outgoing counterpart to learn that officer’s responsibilities, schedule of activities, contacts for vendors, business accounts, etc. These meetings are best done one-on-one so both individuals can discuss freely any issues and concerns integral to the work. And being an officer of a county, state, regional, and national beekeeping association is work. The larger the organization, the diversity of
activities of the group will of course mean increased volunteer work. Certainly, those tasks of placing new officer names on bank accounts, Paypal accounts, website services, etc. all need to be accomplished in a timely manner. Important to any officer position are standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the position. Each officer would contribute to their SOP any updates to procedures, but an SOP becomes an invaluable guide for incoming Board officers to support them in accomplishing their work. Committee chairpersons as well should meet one-on-one with their newly elected/appointed replacement, and review the SOPs for the committee tasks, so projects continue to run smoothly.

Getting the board focused on the new year

As the “old and new” board presidents transition the board, it is helpful for all new board members to become familiar with the bee club’s By Laws and policies. The “old and new” board members can meet in December (or the end of the club’s fiscal year) and hold a joint meeting. This joint meeting is important in setting the tone for the organization’s board for the coming year. If the officers (new and old) display camaraderie, respect, support, commitment, ethics, and responsibility then the entire board will respond accordingly. This combined meeting can be a good time to plan for the coming year. The previous year’s strategic plan can be reviewed, updated, and new ideas/projects contributed. New leaders bring change. While some members may not like change, other members need the change. For the club to grow, change will happen. Any changes in the club’s programs, meeting site, activities, outreach, etc. must first and foremost support the mission. Good leaders allow board members to try new ideas. Trying new things is how the board learns the members’ needs; the board helps train the future leaders with small projects; and the board shows respect and support of the commitment of their fellow board members.

Setting expectations of new board members

It is important for the leaders (officers) of the association to set the expectation of participation. Board members who present ideas, or suggest tasks or projects, must also be willing to spearhead the project. Those board members who like to “tell others what to do” and never volunteer with the follow-through will need to be encouraged to take the lead on their idea or garner support from others to collaborate. The officers of the bee club are not the “staff” of the board members, or even the membership. Board members must understand their role, be given guidance, even goals. Not everyone is a self-starter. During the strategic planning the board members should set goals. For example each board member should attend every board meeting. The By laws may define attendance requirements. However, when a board member misses three consecutive meetings without an excuse, they really do not want to be involved, or life has gotten in the way and they cannot commit the time. Some board members cannot make the decision to resign, so it is up to the board president to talk with the board member and determine if they cannot fulfill their elected duties. Board members who are allowed to remain on a board, missing numerous meetings, often suddenly appear at a meeting, and put all projects on hold as they have to be updated as to activities, or they want it all stopped so they can review activities. This is akin to opening the door of a meeting, tossing in a firecracker, and running away. Board members who cannot commit to the board meeting schedule, refuse to review meeting minutes, nor stay current with board activities are not fulfilling their duties as a bee club board member. These
“firecrackers” are expressing disrespect, inconsideration, and irresponsibility to their fellow board members, the mission of the bee club, and the membership.

Self-serving leaders are unethical and violate nonprofit guidelines

The “brave and hardy souls” providing vision for bee clubs, fulfilling the mission of their bee association do so for the good of the club and their members. Key to building camaraderie, trust, and respect from fellow board members, and from the membership are leaders who focus on serving the members. Those leaders/officers who simply create programs, rules, classes to sell their bee equipment, teach only their beekeeping management style, expect the members to support their bee business violate the very mission of a member association. A self-serving leader who personally and financially benefits from “leading” a beekeeping association (any member association actually) is unethical, disrespecting the membership, and in violation of nonprofit guidelines.

As you take the helm of your beekeeping association you want to build camaraderie, inspire respect, provide support, show your commitment, be ethical, and responsible as a board member, as an example to your fellow board members, and in serving the bee association to the best of your ability. Your actions, and the actions of every board member represent the beekeeping association; and reflect upon every member of the club as well.

A vision for your beekeeping association

Beekeeping associations have grown exponentially in the last ten years. Everyone wants to “save the bees.” Bee clubs must provide quality beekeeping education for new, intermediate, and experienced beekeepers: learning is a lifelong activity. Bee clubs must provide quality outreach to the community to ensure beekeepers can keep bees in the cities, villages, and townships. Bee clubs must advocate for their members, and their members’ bees (and all pollinators) so laws and ordinances are not in conflict with actual beekeeping practices. As states develop pollinator protection plans beekeepers must be an advocate for their bees and beekeeping. Too many bee clubs do not want to be “political.” Advocating for your right to keep bees, educating others about the value of honey bees is all part of education, outreach, marketing (honey sales), and protection of bee forage. Beekeepers and bee clubs must be advocates for themselves and their bees. Otherwise non-beekeepers will write laws and ordinances, and we all know that never works out well!

You and your fellow board members can discuss the following questions as you develop your vision, your strategic plan for your term as officers and leaders.

- As a new leader what are the changes you see need to be made to help the bee club run smoothly?
- What changes do you think will improve the organization?
- How will you develop a vision to serve your members?
- How will you advocate for your members and their honey bees?
- What projects need to be completed?
- What new ideas will serve the membership best?
• What new ideas will provide outreach to the public and policy makers?
• How will the bee club advocate for their members at the county, city, state, and national level?
• Will the bee club collaborate with other groups to accomplish education, outreach, projects, advocacy, etc.?
• What are the goals of each board member for their term?
  o For example: attend all board meetings, visit three other state bee clubs during the year; work the county/state fair honey booth; represent beekeepers on the state pollinator plan; give three presentations about bees to community groups, etc.
• What tasks will you take on to accomplish the goals?

Leaders want to leave their “mark” on the organization. You want your tenure to have made a difference. Working with your fellow board members new leaders can accomplish much working together, respectfully, enthusiastically, and competently; and, therein having fun doing the work of the beekeeping association.

Research

Chronic exposure to neonicotinoids reduces honey bee health near corn crops

N. Tsvetkov,1 O. Samson-Robert,2 K. Sood,1 H. S. Patel,1 D. A. Malena,1 P. H. Gajiwala,1 P. Maclukiewicz,1 V. Fournier,2 A. Zayed1*

Experiments linking neonicotinoids and declining bee health have been criticized for not simulating realistic exposure. Here we quantified the duration and magnitude of neonicotinoid exposure in Canada’s corn-growing regions and used these data to design realistic experiments to investigate the effect of such insecticides on honey bees. Colonies near corn were naturally exposed to neonicotinoids for up to 4 months—the majority of the honey bee’s active season. Realistic experiments showed that neonicotinoids increased worker mortality and were associated with declines in social immunity and increased queenlessness over time. We also discovered that the acute toxicity of neonicotinoids to honey bees doubles in the presence of a commonly encountered fungicide. Our work demonstrates that field-realistic exposure to neonicotinoids can reduce honey bee health in corn-growing regions.


Landscape predictors of pathogen prevalence and range contractions in U.S. Bumble bees

S. McArt, C. Urbanowicz, S. McCoshum, R. Irwin, L. Adler

Several species of bumble bees have recently experienced range contractions and possible extinctions. While threats to bees are numerous, few analyses have attempted to understand the relative importance
of multiple stressors. Such analyses are critical for prioritizing conservation strategies. Here, we describe a landscape analysis of factors predicted to cause bumble bee declines in the USA. We quantified 24 habitat, land-use, and pesticide usage variables across 284 sampling locations, assessing which variables predicted pathogen prevalence and range contraction via machine learning model selection techniques. We found that greater usage of the fungicide chlorothalonil was the best predictor of pathogen (*Nosema bombi*) prevalence in four declining species of bumble bees. *Nosema bombi* has previously been found in greater prevalence in some declining US bumble bee species compared to stable species. Greater usage of total fungicides was the strongest predictor of range contractions in declining species, with bumble bees in the northern USA experiencing greater likelihood of loss from previously occupied areas. These results extend several recent laboratory and semi-field studies that have found surprising links between fungicide exposure and bee health. Specifically, our data suggest landscape-scale connections between fungicide usage, pathogen prevalence, and declines of threatened and endangered bumble bees.  

**READ THE FULL PAPER HERE**  

---

**Seeds for spring flowers for honey bees!**

Pollinator Stewardship Council has partnered with Ohio Prairie Nursery in support of pollinator habitat. **You can get native seeds for eastern U.S. planting zones here.** Select “Support our Cause” ([http://www.ohioprairienursery.com/?ref=pollsteco](http://www.ohioprairienursery.com/?ref=pollsteco)) to view featured seed selections to benefit pollinators. **A portion of sales generated from our website will help support our work.**

---

**Seeds for honey bees WEST of the Mississippi**

To increase plant biodiversity, improve gardens yields, and make a positive difference for the future, plant for pollinators WEST of the Mississippi with bbbseed. The Plant for Pollinators Project, developed by bbbseed, offers a discount on their pollinator mixes. Go to their website, find and enter the discount code, and **Plant For Pollinators!**  
[https://www.bbbseed.com/articles/plant-for-pollinators-project/](https://www.bbbseed.com/articles/plant-for-pollinators-project/)

---

**Betterbee Has Seeds for Pollinator Habitat**

Betterbee was at the Massachusetts Beekeepers Assn. Spring Meeting offering a variety of seed mixes for beekeepers to plant. You can find seven seed mix varieties at their [website](http://www.bbbseed.com)
We are member supported! The Pollinator Stewardship Council is a nonprofit organization; donations are tax deductible.

Old Mill Honey Co.
Foothill Honey Farm
Wind River Honey Co.
Miksa Honey Farms
California-Minnesota Honey Farms
Rick Smith
Bob McDonell
Samuel Hall
Headwaters Farm
Hiatt Honey, LLC
South Dakota Beekeepers Assn.
Bret Adee
Indian Run Apiary
California Apiaries, LLC
Harmony Honey Co.

Geauga County Beekeepers
http://www.geaugacountybeekeepers.org/

Nature’s Own Designs Apiary Products
http://noedglobal.com/

Essex County Beekeepers’ Assn.
http://www.essexcountybeekeepers.org/index.shtml

Los Angeles County Beekeepers Assn.
http://www.las angeles county beekeepers.com/

Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Assn.
http://www.pastatebeekers.org/

The Studio Digital http://www.thestudiodigital.com/

Beekpeking Insurance Services
http://www.beekpekingins.com/

Crop Pollination Association of Australia

Cox Honey of Utah
Michigan Commercial Beekeepers Assn.

Red-Headed Honey https://redheadedhoney.com/
Sunrise Feed & Supply http://sunrisefeed.com/
Kentucky State Beekeepers Association
http://www.ksbeabeekeeping.org/
Butterfly Pavilion  
https://www.butterflies.org/

A.H. Meyer & Sons, Inc.  
http://www.ahmeyerandsons.com/

People and Pollinators Action Network  
http://www.peoplenpollinators.org/

Seib's Hoosier Honey  
http://www.seibshoosierhoney.com/

Strachan Apiaries  
https://www.strachanbees.com/

Sunshine Apiary, Inc.  
https://www.facebook.com/sunshineapiary

Tennessee Beekeepers Assn.  
http://www.tnbeekens.org/

Empire State Honey Producers Assn.  
http://www.eshpa.org/

Smith Farm Pure Honey  
www.smithfarmpurehoney.com/

Randy Oliver  
http://scientificbeekeeping.com/

Browning's Honey Co., Inc.  
http://www.browningshoney.com/

Wilson County Beekeepers Assn.  
http://wilsoncountybeekers.org/

Hackenberg Apiaries  
http://hackenbergapiaries.org/

Nashville Area Beekeepers Assn.  
http://nashbee.org/

Delta Bee Club  
http://www.deltaabeecub.org/

Colorado State Beekeepers Assn.  
http://coloradobeekers.org/

Heartland Agricultural Society  
http://www.heartlandbees.org/

Beekers of Middle Tennessee  
http://bomtn.org/

Northern Kentucky Beekeepers Assn.  
http://www.nkybeekers.com/

Clarksville Montgomery County Beekeeping Assn.  
http://www.cmcbea.com/
Beekeepers Working for Beekeepers

The Board and Program Director are all beekeepers. We work to:

- Raise awareness about the adverse impact of pesticides on pollinators critical to the supply of food and the ecosystem.
- Provide advocacy, guidance, and tools to document the detrimental effect of pesticides on pollinators.
- Affect regulatory processes of pesticide risk assessment, label, and enforcement.