

# PENNSYLVANIA APIARY ADVISORY BOARD

## VOLUNTARY BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR MAINTAINING EUROPEAN HONEY BEE COLONIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Name & mailing address of beekeeper:    **Beekeeper Identification Number issued to registered  
beekeeper by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture:  
Apiary yard(s) to which this agreement applies:**

I hereby voluntarily agree to follow and abide by the “*Voluntary Best Management Practices for  
Maintaining European Honey Bee Colonies in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*” as outlined below:

### Definitions:

1. **EHB** – the European Honey Bee, being the common honey bee species managed in North America.
2. **Non-EHB** – means non-European honey bees. These include hybrids of the European Honey Bee with other species of bees which may be more aggressive than European subspecies.
3. **Requeen** – this is when the queen of the honey bee colony is removed by the beekeeper and replaced with another queen by means of a queen cell or a method of controlled release of an adult queen.
4. “**Undeveloped Property**” – means any idle land that has no structures or facilities intended for human use or occupancy. Property used exclusively for streets, highways or commercial agriculture is to be considered undeveloped property for the purpose of the Voluntary Best Management Practices for Maintaining European Honey Bee Colonies in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### Guidelines:

1. Abide by and remain in compliance with all Pennsylvania laws as they pertain to honey bees.
2. Not knowingly maintain colonies of any race of bee other than European races (EHB).
3. Report all colonies suspected of being non-EHB race to The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture ([www.agriculture.state.pa.us](http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us)).
4. Requeen all colonies which are overtly defensive.
5. Place hive entrances in such a direction that bees fly across the beekeeper’s property. The use of barriers may be employed to redirect the bees’ flight pathway and establish bee flight pathways above six feet.
6. Manage honey bee colonies to minimize swarming.
7. Minimize hive density for potential conflict with people and consider the carrying capacity of immediate area and roughly two miles in all directions.

8. Provide a convenient source of water on the property that is available to the bees, if one is not otherwise available, so that the bees do not congregate at unintended water sources.
9. In the event that a county in which I keep bees is declared a non-EHB suspect or detected area I will:
  - a. Kill all swarms caught or trapped in the county or replace the queens of all swarms caught or trapped with queens produced from known European sources.
  - b. Maintain at least one bait trap in each apiary.
  - c. Requeen and destroy all drone brood in colonies found not to be EHB (with a 95% certainty).
  - d. Provide the name and contact information of all suppliers from which I purchased queens.
  - e. Depopulate all colonies determined to be a pure or hybrid race other than EHB.
  - f. Not establish an apiary within 50 feet of any pre-existing animal permanently tethered, kenneled, or otherwise prevented from escaping a stinging insect.
  - g. Not manage or disturb colonies if neighbors or the general public are participating in outside activities or using machinery within the immediate vicinity.
10. If transporting colonies during daylight hours, secure the load and screen entrances or place a net over the colonies to prevent bees from escaping.
11. Post a honey bee caution sign in or near apiary as needed.
12. Marking or labeling hives with contact information is recommended.
13. Reasonable hive densities for given locations may vary widely. Factors influencing hive density in an area may include: human density, quality and quantity of plants, and number of bee hives already present. Commercial beekeepers may have varying numbers of colonies in an area depending on many factors including: pollination and other contractual requirements, queen bee and/or nucleus colony production, and honey production. Honey bees may be used as part of an educational display in nature centers, museums, gardens, schools, and other sites. Educating the public about honey bees and their value is an important goal for all beekeepers.

The PA Apiary Advisory Board strongly recommends seeking expert advice from the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers' Association, The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, The Penn State Center for Pollinator Research, local beekeeping associations, and universities and colleges with an apiary program in order to determine optimal hive densities.

BEEKEEPER'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

BEEKEEPER'S PRINTED NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

The Pennsylvania Apiary Advisory Board is made up of group of industry leaders and is an advisory group of the Plant Health Resource Center. The Plant Health Resource Center is collaboration between the Pennsylvania State University, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and other state and federal and private partners to enhance the protection of Pennsylvania's plant resources.

Revised 11 November 2016