



Canadian Food Inspection Agency    Agence canadienne  
d'inspection des aliments

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Dr. Greg B. Douglas  
Provincial Chief Veterinary Officer  
Director, Animal Health and Welfare  
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor NW  
1 Stone Rd. W  
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Dear Dr. Douglas,

Due to the long, harsh winter experienced across Canada, many beekeepers are finding a larger than average percentage of winterkill in their apiaries. Not all numbers are known at this time as some beekeepers still cannot access their hives, however unofficial reports are as high as 50% winterkill. As a result, we have received numerous questions regarding the importation of packaged bees to replenish the hives.

Packaged bees may be sourced from Australia, New Zealand and Chile. Conditions for their importation can be found on our Automated Import Reference System (AIRS). Honeybee packages however, cannot be sourced from the US. A prohibition order was put in place in 1987 and upheld by a full-risk assessment performed in 2003. As per Section 160 of the Health of Animals Regulations, the likelihood that imported honeybee packages from the US would not, or would not be likely to, result in the introduction into Canada, or the spread within Canada, of a vector, disease or toxic substance was assessed. At that time, the greatest risk for importation was Varroa mites resistant to treatment, followed by American foulbrood, Africanized honeybee and small hive beetle. Due to the winterkill experienced by the Industry this year, the requests for the importation of honeybee packages from the US have increased significantly. As a result, the CFIA is currently updating the 2003 risk assessment. A full evaluation of the disease risk associated with imports will be conducted before any changes can be made to the current import conditions for honeybee packages from the US.

We would like to ask you, as the CVO of your province, to please share this information with your industry.

Sincerely,

Dr. Francine Lord  
Director, Animal Import/Export Division  
Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer of Canada

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