



April 30, 2013

Honourable Gerry Ritz
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food,
1341 Baseline Road,
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0C5

Dear Honourable Minister Ritz,

Ontario Beekeepers' Association (OBA) mission ensures a thriving and sustainable beekeeping industry in Ontario. To this end, OBA advocates for beekeeper's interests, support honey bee health research and deliver practical training and information. OBA leads with well-informed and skilled beekeepers, healthy and plentiful honeybees raised in Ontario, a prosperous beekeeping industry as well as widespread appreciation for honey and for the critical role honey bees play in agriculture.

The OBA is writing you to inform you that our organization does not support the Canadian border opening to package bees from United States.

The OBA wishes to raise serious concerns that we have with this; two concerns are bee health related and the third is a public health issue:

- 1) The U.S. beekeeping industry is dealing with varroa mites that are resistant to treatments that are still working on Canada. Right now we are able to control our varroa mite populations using Amitrez as an active ingredient. Locations within the U.S. have mites resistant to Amitrez. If we import bees from the U.S. we are sure to import a population of these resistant mites; this would impact the ability for our industry to control this deadly pest to honey bees.
- 2) Colony Collapse Disorder in the U.S. has still not been diagnosed in Canada. Any other pests or diseases that we don't know if the U.S. may have could also affect Canadian honey bee health.
- 3) The risk of importing africanized honey bee genetics from the U.S. is too great. Africanized honey bees or "killer bees" would not be worth the risk of importation. Ontario is somewhat unique in that there is beekeeping taking place

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in urban settings. Africanised honey bee genetics cause colonies to swarm and spread frequently. If any africanized honey bee swarms resulting from bees imported from the US make their way into any town or city the consequences could be disastrous.

OBA urges the CFIA to reconsider this decision.
OBA would welcome the opportunity to speak further to this situation at your convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Davidson, OBA President

Cc:

George Da Pont, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, President
Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Agriculture- Ontario
Rod Scarlett, Canadian Honey Council, Executive Director
Gerry McKee, Canadian Honey Council, Chair