

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: November 20, 2024

Report Number: CA2024-0055

Report Name: Canada Consults on Risk Mitigation Options for US Packaged Honey Bees

Country: Canada

Post: Ottawa

Report Category: Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety, Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

On November 7, 2024, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) opened a consultation on risk mitigation options for U.S. packaged honey bees as part of their process for updating the risk analysis for importation of U.S. packages. The completed process will determine if there are acceptable risk mitigation measures which would mitigate identified risks to an acceptable level to permit the importation of U.S. packages to Canada. Stakeholders with scientifically backed risk mitigation proposals are invited to submit feedback to CFIA. The consultation will close January 9, 2025.

Canada has restricted importation of honeybees from the United States since 1987, as a result of pest and disease concerns. Risk analyses in 2003 and 2013 upheld the original prohibition on U.S. packaged honeybees. However, importation of U.S. honeybee queens, with appropriate certification, has been permitted since 2004.

The Canadian bee industry has struggled with significant overwinter [losses](#) to colonies in recent years and supply chain disruptions to sourcing honeybee packages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) opened access to honeybee packages from Ukraine and Italy in 2023, in addition to access for packages from Australia, Chile, and New Zealand, the United States would provide a closer proximity source market as well as some environmental similarities, depending on the origin state. CFIA began preliminary consultations in 2022 before initiating a new U.S. risk assessment in June 2023. CFIA's updated [risk analysis](#) continues to highlight concerns about potential for pest and disease introduction to Canada, should the prohibition on U.S. packages be removed without acceptable risk mitigation measures in place. CFIA estimates a 100 percent probability of entry, exposure, and establishment from U.S. packages, estimating 50,000 packages imported per year, for four concerns of interest:

- Small hive beetle (SHB)
- Africanized honeybees (AHB)
- American foulbrood (rAFB^{OTC})
- Varroa mites (rVAR^{am})

Canada completed national honeybee health [surveys](#) from 2014 to 2017.

CFIA has placed the acceptable level of risk or acceptable level of protection (ALOP) at negligible risk level (NRL). At present, the risk analysis identifies the risk of U.S. packages as above NRL. With the current consultation, CFIA will consider science-based risk mitigation proposals which could achieve an NRL for importation of U.S. packages. In addition to clearly demonstrating a scientific approach to risk mitigation, any proposals must also be practical, feasible, and effective. CFIA notes that the following must be factored into any proposals:

- Must consider an importation level of 50,000 U.S. packages per year and demonstrate that risk mitigation would result in entry, exposure, and establishment of hazards is negligible.
- Any proposal for zoning requires:
 - Clear definitions from the exporting country and supported by its veterinary authority (USDA APHIS for the United States),
 - Detailed biosecurity plan,

- Well documented surveillance and control programs.
- Must consider all facets of the supply chain.
- Must consider technical, operational, and economic feasibility.
- Must address all identified hazards and how risks will be reduced to the acceptable level (NRL).

Stakeholders can respond to the [consultation](#), following consideration of the [risk management framework](#), until January 9, 2025 by emailing:

ConsultationUSHoneybees-ConsultationAbeillesEU@inspection.gc.ca

The CFIA can also be contacted for the risk assessment and hazard identification documents at the same email address.

Attachments:

No Attachments.