

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
DIVISION OF PLANT INDUSTRY
BUREAU OF PLANT AND APIARY INSPECTION
APIARY INSPECTION SECTION

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
FOR MAINTAINING EUROPEAN HONEY BEE COLONIES

1. This is a voluntary program designed to minimize the threat of Africanized Honey Bees (AHB) in Florida and to dilute any feral AHB populations that may become established in Florida as our gentle managed colonies are our best line of defense against AHB.
2. Beekeepers participating in this program must sign a compliance agreement with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
3. Beekeepers will maintain a valid registration with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services/Division of Plant Industry (FDACS/DPI), and be current with any and all special inspection fees.
4. A Florida apiary may be deemed as EHB (European Honey Bee) with a minimum 10% random survey of colonies using the FABIS (Fast African Bee Identification System) and/or the computer-assisted morphometric procedure, ie. universal system for the detection of Africanized Honey Bees (AHB) (USDA-ID), or other approved methods by FDACS on a yearly basis or as requested.
5. Honey bee colony divisions or splits should be queened with production queens or queen cells from EHB breeder queens following Florida's Best Management Practices.
6. Florida beekeepers are discouraged from collecting swarms that cannot be immediately re-queened from EHB queen producers.
7. Florida Beekeepers should practice good swarm prevention techniques to prevent an abundance of virgin queens and their ready mating with available AHB drones that carry the defensive trait.
8. Maintain all EHB colonies in a strong, healthy, populous condition to discourage usurpation (take over) swarms of AHB.
9. Do not allow any weak or empty colonies to exist in an Apiary, as they may be attractive to AHB swarms.
10. Recommend re-queening with European stock every six months unless using marked or clipped queens and having in possession a bill of sale from a EHB Queen Producer.
11. Immediately re-queen with a European Queen if previously installed clipped or marked queen is found missing.
12. Maintain one European drone source colony (250 square inches of drone comb) for every 10 colonies in order to reduce supercedure queens mating with AHB drones.
13. To protect public safety and reduce beekeeping liability do not site apiaries in proximity of tethered or confined animals, students, the elderly, general public, drivers on public roadways, or visitors where this may have a higher likelihood of occurring.
14. Treat all honey bees with respect.