

# **SB 482**

## Testimony



State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL KOKUBUN  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, AND  
COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION  
FEBRUARY 25, 2013  
Room 229  
1:00 pm**

**SENATE BILL NO. 482  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairpersons Nishihara, Green, and Baker and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill No. 482. This measure proposes to encourage and support sustainable beekeeping in Hawaii by raising the allowances for home production of honey, and enabling beekeepers to sell honey to retail outlets and directly to consumers. Currently home honey production in Hawaii is allowed for 50 gallons or less. The Department of Agriculture supports this measure.

The recent arrival of devastating honey bee pests has put additional pressure and financial burdens on beekeepers statewide. It is well understood that pollinator success is linked to other agricultural productivity. Hawaii's annual **Farm Gate Sales** from bee-pollinated crops is valued at \$212.8 million. A single colony of honey bees will forage on plants within a 3-5 mile radius, so every colony can have significant impact on agriculture and ecosystems. Newly introduced pests and parasites have severely impacted feral colonies, making managed colonies even more critical for agricultural success. In nationally established surveys to monitor honey bee health since 2006, beekeepers are classified as **BACKYARD** (small) beekeepers if they have 50 colonies or less, **SIDELINERS** with 51-500 colonies or **COMMERCIAL** beekeepers with 500+ colonies. The vast majority of beekeepers in Hawaii have fewer than 500 colonies,



although compared to all other states, Hawaii is consistently ranked near the midpoint for number of colonies statewide, and in the top 10<sup>th</sup> percentile for honey yield per colony. Honey yields and price per pound fluctuate annually, but using National Agricultural Statistic Service averages for the last 10 years of Hawaiian honey production, 50 gallons of honey would be produced by only 6 colonies making average honey crops. Production exceeding that level currently requires a certified food production establishment. This low limit disables most small beekeepers from selling their honey crop in compliance with state regulations. A higher allowance is desirable to encourage sustainable beekeeping and industry growth.

Other states such as Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin (all with many more managed colonies than Hawaii) require no permit or license for honey production, just proper labeling. Florida and Michigan (again with many more managed colonies than Hawaii) cap home production allowances at sales below \$15,000. If we apply this standard in Hawaii, using 10 year low and high prices per pound, this would allow a beekeeper to sell approximately 265-1126 gallons of honey, which is an appropriate range for an operation with less than 50 colonies.

We ask the committee to consider adopting a standard which would allow Hawaii beekeepers below COMMERCIAL production levels greater latitude to produce and sell their honey, up to 500 gallons, which will encourage sustainable beekeeping and agricultural growth throughout the state.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide our testimony on this measure.

To: Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture

RE: SB482

Date: 2/22/2013

As a small commercial beekeeper and current President of Hawai`i Beekeepers' Association, and on behalf of our members, I urge that you not hear this bill your committee.

We are opposed to SB482 for the following reasons. Although making it easier for small beekeepers to sell their products in the retail market, this bill could have damaging effects to the beekeeping industry in Hawai`i.

1. Most small scale bee keepers will not produce for sale more than the 50 gallons already allowed. This bill opens the door for inexperienced beekeepers to increase or create operations for the financial profit of selling unregulated honey, and could be an inducement to import cheap honey from outside the state in order to capitalize on the reputation of our local honeys as being the best in the world. Practices that may be harmful to bees and consumers may occur, such as the use of unapproved and/or dangerous pesticides to control mite and beetle populations in said hives.
2. Inexperienced beekeepers may increase the number of hives and not manage them properly, in order to sell more honey , creating a breeding ground for the further spread of pests and disease. This would create a more dangerous environment for hives that are being properly and responsively managed and endanger the bee population in Hawai`i.
3. The possibility of honey being extracted and bottled in unsanitary conditions increases. The introduction of water or other contaminants to the honey may occur, which would lead to the degradation of the quality of local honey and have serious negative effect on its reputation.
4. The negative price pressure created by what would be an unfair advantage for those producing up to 6,000 pounds of would probably result in lowered income for our already very challenged beekeepers. This would result in the reverse of the effect that SB482 is seeking to create.

Anthony Maxfield, President  
Hawai`i Beekeepers' Association  
808-638-5302

February 23, 2013

Aloha, Distinguished Senate Committee Members:

We, the undersigned Board of Directors of the Big Island Beekeepers Association (BIBA), are submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 482.

BIBA is a non-profit organization representing a large contingent of beekeepers on the island of Hawaii. Although open to commercial as well as hobbyist beekeepers, the majority of our members are hobbyist or backyard beekeepers. These beekeepers are found all over the Big Island, and may keep several hives or up to fifty or more. Since the honey bee will forage up to five miles in the collection of pollen and nectar, our member beekeepers are responsible for the health and well-being of millions of bees who pollinate the crops and farms of our neighbors as well as our own yards and farms. These crops include macadamia nuts, coffee, lychee, mango, citrus, and many more of the agricultural crops that support farmers and residents on this island. The same situation is true on our neighboring islands as well.

As legislators are well aware, the honey bee has had numerous challenges to its continued health and existence on our islands since the arrival of varroa mite, nosema, and the small hive beetle. Beekeepers are forced to invest in extensive pest management strategies that are both financially challenging and labor intensive. For all beekeepers – commercial and hobbyist alike – the extraction and sale of the honey produced by their hives supports and funds the management of the bees in our care. Without the income which their honey crop provides, many beekeepers would be forced out of business.

The Board of Directors of BIBA is strongly in support of SB 482. This bill would reduce the burden upon the small-scale beekeeper to process honey in a certified kitchen or honey house, and would increase limits of production from only 50 gallons per year to 500 gallons per year. According to ten year average data for the State of Hawaii, 50 gallons of honey can be produced annually by only 6 colonies of bees. Most small-scale beekeepers will maintain at least six colonies, if not more, and thus will greatly exceed a production of 50 gallons annually.

Increasing the limit to 500 gallons is much more in line with the production capability of the average small-scale or home beekeeper. Legislative changes proposed by SB 482 will help our honey farmers without jeopardizing health and safety of the consumer in any way. As the bill describes, honey is an antibiotic and antibacterial natural substance.

The high sugar content of honey inhibits the growth of harmful microbes, and honey is actually used by doctors and hospitals in the treatment of burns and wounds precisely because of these antimicrobial qualities. A certified kitchen is not necessary for the hygienic production of honey. Further, the increased labeling requirements of SB 482 will give consumers the knowledge necessary to make their own healthy choices regarding the purchase of our natural, Hawaiian artisanal honey.

We urge the support of SB482.

Sincerely,

Larry Reiss, President  
Carol Conner, Secretary  
Rod Vanderhoef, Treasurer  
BIG ISLAND BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



**Hawaii Farm Bureau**  
F E D E R A T I O N

2343 Rose Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Phone: (808) 848-2074 • Neighbor-Islands: (800) 482-1272  
Fax: (808) 848-1921 • Email: [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org)  
[www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

February 25, 2013

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
SENATE COMMITTEE COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

TESTIMONY ON SB 482  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 229  
1:00 PM

Chair Nishihara, Chair Green, Chair Baker, and Members of the Committees:

I am Dean Okimoto, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,950 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

HFBF supports the intent of SB 482 which proposes to exempt certain producers of agricultural products from processing the product in a certified honey house or food-processing establishment, or obtaining a permit from the department of health.

HFBF recognizes that honey bees play a critical role in Hawaii agriculture. Honey bee problems are problems for all of us since many local crops are pollinated by bees. Hawaii produces some of the finest quality honey and there is a growing demand for artisan Hawaiian honeys.

HFBF supports the continued viability of honey bee stocks and the growth of Hawaii's honey industry. With regards to the amendments to §328-79, which increases the exempted amount of honey that a home-based honey producers can sell, allows the home-based honey producers to sell directly to retail outlets, and provides safeguards for food safety, HFBF defers to DOA and DOH to determine the appropriate actions, if any, are needed if the amendments are adopted.

I can be reached at (808) 848-2074 if you have any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Gus Rouse, President  
P.O. Box 768  
Captain Cook, HI 96704



Phone: (808) 328-9016  
Fax: (808) 328-9460  
E-Mail: queenbee@aloha.net

## Kona Queen Hawaii, Inc.

February 22, 2013

Senator Josh Green  
State Capitol, Room 215  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu , Hawaii

Fax: 808-586-9391

**RE: S.B. NO. 482 Relating to exempting certain requirements for sales of honey**

Dear Senator Green:

Understanding that there is a hearing on Senate Bill No. 482 on Monday, February 25, 2013 I would like for you to know my stance. We, at Kona Queen Hawaii Inc., see no reason to change the current law as it stands. The current version allowing for up to 600 pounds of honey produced in an unpermitted facility and sold directly to consumers is reasonable enough.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gus Rouse". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gus Rouse  
President



**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
**To:** [AGL Testimony](#)  
**Cc:** [MMKLIKS@HAWAII.RR.COM](mailto:MMKLIKS@HAWAII.RR.COM)  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SB482 on Feb 25, 2013 13:00PM  
**Date:** Friday, February 22, 2013 10:08:37 AM

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SB482

Submitted on: 2/22/2013

Testimony for AGL/HTH/CPN on Feb 25, 2013 13:00PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
MICHAEL M. KLIKS, PHD	HAWAI'I BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION; MANOA HONEY COMPA	Oppose	Yes

Comments: TESTIMONY IN STRONG OPPOSITION TO SB 482 Aloha na hoa: this is an ill conceived bill and it is dangerous for the apiculture industry in general, and for the reputation of our premium Hawaiian honeys in particular, in that it would suddenly allow anyone to sell up to 6,000 pounds of honey in all levels of both retail and wholesale commerce outlets. . .from the beds of their pickups to the shelves of health food stores and gourmet markets. . .without any inspections as to sanitation and hygiene, without being vetted by any group or agency as to the source, quality, or the purity of what is being sold, and without having undergone any permitting processes that would provide standards for quality assurance and quality control. By changing the rules to allow what amounts to about \$60,000 worth of honey to be sold in local stores and markets, with no oversight, this bill would create an attractive opportunity for unscrupulous persons to bring in cheap honey from elsewhere and sell it in our marketplace to take advantage of the world class reputation that we have build for our Hawaiian honeys over the past 40 years. We believe that the current version of this law (HRS 328-79), that allows for up to 600 pounds (50 gallons) of honey, produced in an un-permitted facility, to be sold ONLY DIRECTLY TO THE CONSUMER is adequate. Michael M. Kliks, PhD, Past President, Hawai`I Beekeepers' Association

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**SB482**

Submitted on: 2/22/2013

Testimony for AGL/HTH/CPN on Feb 25, 2013 13:00PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Howard Hill	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As a long time small honey producer on the Island of Hawaii, I'd like to express support for the concept of increasing the amount produced by the non certified small beekeeper to 500 gallons of honey per year. Honey is a very safe and healthy food for all but infants. I have to express reservations about the label requirements. I would like to read exactly what is proposed before I can support it.

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Submitted on: 2/22/2013

Testimony for AGL/HTH/CPN on Feb 25, 2013 13:00PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Randall Blake	Individual	Support	No

Comments: This is a sweet bill for those of us who do apiaries as a hobby to help support our hobby. Please vote yes Mahalo Randall Blake

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kay Howe	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support SB 482 that raises the number of gallons of honey that can be extracted in a home kitchen. It is unrealistic for small, beekeepers and hobby beekeepers to haul equipment to commercial kitchens to extract honey, and to have to keep valuable extracting equipment at the kitchens. Passage of this bill will greatly aid beekeepers and in turn, farmers and Hawaii's agriculture industry.

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kenneth Harmeyer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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## **Maui Natural Bee, LLC.**

February 23, 2013

Dear Senators,

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB482, which is before you today.

I am a resident of remote Southeast Maui, and with my wife Helen and our assistants we have been raising honeybees and producing high grade raw artisan honey on our farm in a remote area of Southeast Maui for the past several years. Our farm and residence are off the grid, with a well-developed infrastructure that utilizes solar energy and rain water that is filtered, purified and UV treated. My family has been living on renewable resources and growing food at this location since 1972.

We are currently not allowed to sell our honey to retail establishments, although there is an intense demand for our high grade of pure, local honey. This is due to State DOH regulatory requirements that require honey for sale in Hawaii to be either imported from somewhere else, or extracted and bottled in a certified kitchen or processing facility.

It is practically impossible for us to create a certified processing facility on our farm, because a certified facility in Hawaii requires access to Municipal treated water, as well as the removal of other water systems from the site. It would be dangerous and impractical to move our hives to a certified kitchen off-site for extraction and bottling.

Neither water or any other substance is ever added to our honey. Honey is plant nectar that has had water removed from it by the honeybees, until it is below 17% moisture content. As long as honey remains below 17% moisture, it is antiseptic, antibiotic, anti-fungal and antibacterial. It never spoils and cannot host harmful bacteria. The blanket requirement for water certification is non-sensical in regards to honey, and indeed is unique to Hawaii.

Our honeybees are thriving, vibrant and healthy, and we have great concern about the predators and bee diseases that are decimating bee colonies around the world. For this reason, we do not wish to have to transport our frames of honey in wax combs off our property to a certified kitchen for extraction, as has been suggested by DOH. Good beekeeping practice calls for the frames to be replaced in the hives as quickly as possible after the honey is removed so that nothing alien can nest in them.

I wish to ask for your support for the amendment of the existing Home-based agricultural producer of honey exemption (Section 328-79 HRS) as underlined in SB482. This will allow us to safely sell the honey produced at our apiaries to local retail establishments for consumption by the local community. It will similarly help the many other small apiaries throughout the State that cannot currently market their honey, or are forced to sell it directly to consumers or in bulk to go-betweens who export it or sell

it on the grey market. This will lift the primary impediment that is now stopping many small farmers on remote agricultural lands from cultivating honeybees.

I thank you for your consideration and assistance in our attempt to make our honey available to consumers in our communities. Passage of this bill would allow us to continue our beekeeping, and expand our operation far beyond our current 30 thriving colonies.

With Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Starr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jonathan" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Starr".

Jonathan Starr  
[Maui Natural Bee, LLC](#)  
(808) 249-0032  
Piilani Highway, Mile 37.5  
Between Kaupo & Kipahulu,  
Hana, Maui, 96713

**SB482**

Submitted on: 2/23/2013

Testimony for AGL/HTH/CPN on Feb 25, 2013 13:00PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
John Bruce	Individual	Support	No

Comments: This is the kind of bill that you people should be passing. Small farmers, and bee keeping is farming, should be given every opportunity to succeed. Corporate Lobbyists should simply and politely be told to go away.

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Thomas R. Harrowby	Individual	Support	No

**Comments:** I wish to ask for your support for the amendment of the existing Home-based agricultural producer of honey exemption (Section 328-79 HRS) as underlined in SB482. This will allow local bee keepers to safely sell the honey produced at local apiaries to local retail establishments for consumption by the local community.

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Susan Bradford	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support Hawaii's bee production and sales...please vote yes on SB 482..Susan Bradford

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Tina Wildberger	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support this bill. As a consumer, I would like to access raw Maui raised honey at retail outlets new my home. Please take this reasonable step toward sustainable food practices. Mahalo. Tina Wildberger

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Brian Murphy	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Support our local Bee keepers!

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Buck Joiner	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support SB482 and its intent to allow small beekeepers to produce and sell up to 500 gallons of honey per year directly to consumers or directly to a retail store that in turn sells the honey directly to consumers. Since there is no water used in the processing of honey, the certified processing facility with Municipal treated water is onerous and unnecessary.

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Harlan Hughes	Individual	Support	No

**Comments:** "I strongly support SB482 and its intent to allow small beekeepers to produce and sell up to 500 gallons of honey per year directly to consumers or directly to a retail store that in turn sells the honey directly to consumers. Since there is no water used in the processing of honey, the certified processing facility with Municipal treated water is onerous and unnecessary."

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kathleen Harrowby	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I wish to ask for your support for the amendment of the existing Home-based agricultural producer of honey exemption (Section 328-79 HRS) as underlined in SB482. This will allow local bee keepers to safely sell the honey produced at local apiaries to local retail establishments for consumption by the local community.

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dorothy Faison	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dale Bonar	Individual	Support	No

Comments: "I strongly support SB482 and its intent to allow small beekeepers to produce and sell up to 500 gallons of honey per year directly to consumers or directly to a retail store that in turn sells the honey directly to consumers. Since there is no water used in the processing of honey, the certified processing facility with Municipal treated water is onerous and unnecessary."

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lurline Mahealani Henry	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am in support of SB482; Hawaii's Honey farmers should be approved to sell their honey products to community & retail outlets, without a certified kitchen and or other State approved facilities.

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Pauline Fiene	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I enthusiastically support this bill supporting local honey producers.

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Michelle Blake	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As a beekeeper, I support SB 482 which proposes to increase the Home Honey Production limit to 500 gallons. The Department of Agriculture is supporting this bill, as the majority of beekeepers in Hawaii will benefit from it, and in turn beekeeping will become more sustainable and pollination of crops will be more secure throughout the state. Thank you.

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**SB482**

Submitted on: 2/23/2013

Testimony for AGL/HTH/CPN on Feb 25, 2013 13:00PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Charles Danbury	Kauai Island Honey Co.	Comments Only	No

Comments: I believe that any honey that is to be packaged and distributed to stores for retail sales should have Health Dept. over site. Proper sanitation and storage of glass and plastic containers is essential to protect the consumer. Another company's proper business endeavor could be jeopardized by careless actions of another selling local honey that may be contaminated.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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**SB482**

Submitted on: 2/24/2013

Testimony for AGL/HTH/CPN on Feb 25, 2013 13:00PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Simon Russell	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha Kakou Honorable Seantors, Thank you for SB 482, as our honey producers need all of the relief they can get. Respectfully Submitted, Simon Russell  
Farmer Haiku, Maui

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**SB482**

Submitted on: 2/24/2013

Testimony for AGL/HTH/CPN on Feb 25, 2013 13:00PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
julie k harris	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: Please Support Local Beekeepers. I had a neighbor up by the land I used to live, and they kept very good care of their bees. Not once did I have a problem with them. My son used to go over to see if they needed any help. They used to give the neighborhood kids a bag of Yick Lung seeds when they helped. Ono.

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