

# MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release



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## Honey Bee Health Task Force Tackles Serious Honey Bee Issues Timely Support from USDA APHIS and Pollinator Partnership Members

There will be a few more busy researchers gearing up for the 2015 season thanks to support from **Pollinator Partnership's (P2)** generous donors who have helped generate more than \$60,000 for honey bee health issues. With funding from USDA APHIS as well as contributions from individuals who gave donations to honor birthdays, holidays, bat mitzvahs and more. "This fits perfectly with the recently announced federal strategy for honey bee health announced by President Obama," said P2 Exec. Director Laurie Davie Adams. "This public-private partnership is exactly what is called for." See <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/05/19/announcing-new-steps-promote-pollinator-health> to view the federal strategy.

The Honey Bee Health Task Force of the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC), under the co-chairmanship of Dr. Christina Grozinger, Pennsylvania State University, and Dr. Robyn Rose, USDA APHIS, solicits proposals each year in January from University researchers and graduate students who are pioneering new approaches to bee nutrition, conservation, genetics, and epidemiology.

"Researchers today are dealing with more and more complicated questions and scenarios in bee health. Honey Bee Health grants help give pioneering researchers the flexibility to ask additional questions and have sparked some remarkable findings," offers P2 Research Director Dr. Vicki Wojcik.

This year the NAPPC Honey Bee Health Task Force assembled a distinguished panel to review the proposals which included Jeff Pettis, Ph.D., John Skinner, Ph.D., Olav Rueppel, Ph. D., Laurie Davies Adams, Kelly Rourke, Robyn Rose, Ph.D., and Deborah Delaney, Ph. D. The panel funded 6 outstanding research projects that advance the science supporting practical applications in genetics, pesticides, nutrition, best management practices, pathogens and pests. Of the more than 50 applications submitted to the NAPPC Task Force, the following projects will be funded and will reprot progress at the annual NAPPC International Conference in Washongotn, D.C. October 20, 2015:

- **Dr. Diana Cox-Foster at Pennsylvania State University** will be studying the antiviral immune responses of honey bees, including whether bees are able to change their behaviors and self-medicate to avoid or reduce infections.
- **Dr. Adam Dolezal at Iowa State University** will be investigating how infections with viruses might change the behavior of honey bees and perhaps increase their transmission.
- Research into how a full range of pesticides impact bee health will be conducted by **Dr. Scott McArt at Cornell University**.
- Graduate researcher **Rodney T. Richardson at Ohio State University** will be looking into the immune functions of honey bees in response to fumagillin – a commonly used antibiotic in bee hives.



- Veterinarian **Dr. Elemir Simko** at the **University of Saskatchewan** will be testing the impacts of the neonicotinoid imidacloprid on worker bee development and hygienic behavior.
- **Dr. Dennis vanEngelsdorp** at the **University of Maryland** will be looking into the real world impacts of the multitude of pesticides that honey bees interact with as well as their diet to better understand total bee health.

Funding for the 2015 Honey Bee Health grants came from a research partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and APHIS as well as generous donations from individuals through P2's Bee Merry and Bee Mine campaign in support of bee health. Honey Bee Health Grants have been distributed for over 5 years, totaling more than \$300,000 in research support for over 30 research programs in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Funding falls short every year and tax-deductible donations are welcomed throughout the year. One 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom which put on a bake sale for honey bee research contributed over \$400. Every dollar received is leveraged significantly and makes a real difference for honey bees. Contact Kelly Rourke at Pollinator Partnership at [KR@pollinator.org](mailto:KR@pollinator.org) or at 415.362.1137 to join the campaign to increase knowledge about and action for the health of honey bees.

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#### **ABOUT THE NORTH AMERICAN POLLINATOR PROTECTION CAMPAIGN (NAPPC)**

For over 15 years, NAPPC has brought together stakeholders from all sectors of the pollinator issue in a collaborative partnership to support pollinator health across the North American continent. More than any other single organization, the collective effort of these 140 plus organizations has made pollinator health a feature in conservation landscape management. From its many Task Forces, NAPPC affects change and moves solid science into real progress on the ground. Managed by the Pollinator Partnership, more can be found about NAPPC at [www.napcc.org](http://www.napcc.org).

#### **ABOUT THE POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP (P2)**

Established in 1997, the Pollinator Partnership is the largest 501(c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to the health, protection, and conservation of all pollinating animals. Pollinator Partnership's actions for pollinators include education, conservation, restoration, policy, and research. P2's financial support comes through grants, gifts, memberships and donations from any interested party. Its policies are science-based, set by its board of directors, and never influenced by any donor. To make a donation or for information on events during Pollinator Week, visit [www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org).