



**Agricultural
Research
Service**



**HONEY BEE
HEALTH
COALITION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Matt Mulica
mmulica@keystone.org
(406) 240-9606

Honey Bee Health Coalition & USDA ARS Seek 100 Beekeepers for Amitraz Resistance Testing

DENVER, CO – The Honey Bee Health Coalition, working in partnership with the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics, and Physiology lab in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is launching a pilot project to determine the extent of amitraz resistance in Varroa mites (*Varroa destructor*) in managed honey bee colonies in the U.S.

Amitraz is widely used by beekeepers as varroacide, and it currently represents one of the most effective means of controlling Varroa mites. However, as with several other Varroa control measures, inevitably, Varroa mites develop resistance to amitraz. There are signs that some beekeepers are already beginning to see amitraz resistance in their efforts to control Varroa populations. Effective control of Varroa will depend on utilizing alternative miticides and implementing more integrated pest management (IPM) strategies all of which begins with understanding how, when and where resistance develops as well as monitoring varroa population.

The Honey Bee Health Coalition and USDA ARS are looking for 100 beekeepers who keep at least 25 or more hives to enter the pilot project. The beekeepers, whose identities will be kept confidential, will need to sample 8-10 hives that have Varroa infestations and agree to send in their results to USDA-ARS. Hives should be sampled in August or September before miticide application. Beekeepers will receive an amitraz resistance testing kit, including the Apivar™ (amitraz) strips used in the assay, and all instructions on how to conduct the test. In exchange, beekeepers will need to agree to send back their collected data in a provided pre-stamped/addressed envelope, and they will receive the results of their test. This [video](#) will give beekeepers a sense of the testing process. Beekeepers can expect the testing to take a full day. Results of the amitraz resistance test will be immediately shared with participant beekeepers so they can make informed decisions on Varroa treatments. A final analysis of the data will be distributed to all participants and presented at beekeeping conferences.

The Honey Bee Health Coalition and USDA ARS hope to expand the project in following years to include larger numbers of beekeepers from all over the U.S. and Canada sending in their data and to begin building a robust data set to track amitraz resistance.

Please send emails expressing intent to participate to Frank D. Rinkevich (frank.rinkevich@usda.gov). The deadline is September 30.

About the Honey Bee Health Coalition

The Honey Bee Health Coalition brings together beekeepers, growers, researchers, government agencies, agribusinesses, conservation groups, manufacturers, and consumer brands to improve the health of honey bees in general and specifically around production agriculture. It takes collaborative action to improve honey bee health by addressing multiple factors influencing bee health, including hive pests and disease, forage and nutrition, and exposure to crop pesticides.