



The British Beekeepers' Association

National Beekeeping Centre, Stoneleigh-park, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire CV8 2LG

Tel: 02476 696679; Fax: 02476 690682; Email: bbka@britishbeekeepers.com

NEWS RELEASE

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MAKING A BUZZ AT WESTMINSTER

British Beekeepers' Association Lobbies MPs and Lords to Save Nation's Honey Bees Tuesday 22 April

Senior representatives of the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) will meet MPs and members of the Lords to stress the importance of honey bees to the UK's food supply.

Pollination by honey bees is essential for producing one third of the home-grown foods in farms, on allotments and in back gardens.

Lord Rooker, Minister of State for Sustainable Farming, Food and Animal Welfare, has already warned that the nation's honey bees could be wiped out without further research into bee health but has said the government can not afford the £8million over five years, that the BBKA is petitioning for. Over the same period honey bee pollination, which currently contributes £165 million p.a. to the agricultural economy, will contribute more than £800million.

Tim Lovett, President of the BBKA, said: "We will keep our bees only if the government will help us to keep them healthy."

"Does the government want the nation to go without honey on their toast, not have home-grown strawberries to go with cream, and even put their own crusade for the public to eat five portions of fresh fruit and vegetables at risk? Food production is now an important issue and bees are central to it."

"We note that the US government immediately invested \$80 million into research on the condition known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), which has devastated their bee colonies, affecting pollination of the apple orchards, the almond and orange crops.

"CCD has not yet crossed the Channel from Europe, but we are urging the Government that it needs to be prepared should this happen. The central plank in that preparation is a better understanding of diseases and that needs research.

"The government spends just £200,000 out of a budget of £1.5 million for bee health on research. Immediate action needs to be taken to avoid this economic and ecological disaster in the making."

The BBKA has launched The Bee Health Research Funding Campaign, urging the public to write to and petition MPs and Ministers. Further details on www.britishbeekeepers.com

Ends

For further information, interview and photo requests please contact
Christine Gray Press Officer BBKA 01462 450707/07891 000207
christine.m.gray@btinternet.com