

Government Relations Report

by: *Tim May*
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Now that the election has taken place, a big concern for our industry will be the continuing resolution that will run out on December 9th. What will congress do on government funding is the big question. Will they issue a straight continuing resolution, or will they alter or rewrite the legislation? Continuing the Obama Administration's task force on Pollinator Health is crucial. The administration's excellent work on developing a national strategy on pollinator health is great for bees and beekeepers. Our industry is finally receiving some attention from the federal government through this program.

ABF, along with the American Honey Producers Association and several other agricultural organizations, has signed a letter to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack. The letter is a request for a Honey Bee Crop Protection Research Summit in 2017. The summit would explore such topics as the current state of science on crop protection tools and honey bee health; known gaps in research regarding the same; the basis upon which proposed crop protection-related regulatory and mitigation activities are based; and opportunities for public-private partnerships to address these issues in the future. We believe this summit will be a catalyst for collaborative efforts providing real improvements in bee health. We are also requesting that EPA participate in the summit.

We are still looking at acceptable alternative wording for the FDA's new nutritional labeling ruling of "added sugars." So far everything presented to FDA by the National Honey Board has been rejected. This issue is very important to the industry and we will continue to work on an alternative to the ruling.



Here is another reminder that the Veterinary Feed Directive will start on January 1. Beekeepers using antibiotics will need a prescription for all antibiotics used on their bees. FDA recommends that beekeepers have a "valid client-patient relationship" with a state-licensed veterinarian to receive the needed prescriptions. There has been and still is some confusion regarding this issue. Dr. Mike Murphy, DVM, from the FDA CVM (Center for Veterinarian Medicine), has agreed to discuss this at the North American Beekeeping Conference & Tradeshow in January. Dr. Murphy's presentation should clear up any confusion on this issue.

It is difficult to say what the new administration will provide for our industry. Let's hope that we continue to get the attention and help we so desperately need. Hope to see everyone in Galveston.

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