

March 2, 2009

Florida State Beekeepers Association
Officers, Board of Managers, Directors

To Whom It May Concern:

SUBJECT: NEED TO ADDRESS CURRENT HONEY PROCESSING REGULATIONS

The intent of this letter is to clarify the position of Apalachee Beekeepers Association in the resolution submitted to the FSBA Board of Managers at the 2008 mid-year meeting.

Apalachee membership is primarily composed of part time beekeepers. We believe this is indicative of most local associations. After researching the current regulations, we concluded it is cost prohibitive for the vast majority of small-scale honey producers to meet current state requirements to process and sell their honey at retail. Based on our findings and with the intent to promote beekeeping in Florida, we drafted the resolution "**TO SUPPORT CHANGES IN FOOD REGULATIONS FOR PART TIME HONEY PRODUCERS**". This resolution, presented at the mid-year meeting was tabled by vote until the annual meeting. President Laurence Cutts called for a committee to report on the issue at the annual meeting. Despite the timeline established under rules of order, the Board of Managers did not call for the committee report or move to consider the tabled resolution.

I believe our resolution promotes change beneficial to beekeeping in Florida. It encourages and has the potential to reward small scale honey producers. These folks are the backbone of local associations. These associations organize meetings, events, and work to educate the public about beekeeping. They promote beekeeping at a grassroots level. They are the ones fighting unfair ordinances and restrictions. Local associations and their part time beekeeper members are activists and beekeeping ambassadors. If we do not encourage beekeeping and influence young people, where will we get our researchers and beekeepers for the next generation?

There is great interest in locally produced farm products. Many communities have or are developing such markets. A viable local market is an excellent way to promote Florida honey and beekeeping. I believe this market is greatly underutilized. Part time beekeepers need to engage this market, but they need to do it legally and in a profitable manner. The current "one-size fits all" regulatory system makes it cost prohibitive for the small-scale honey producer to participate. A suitable alternative for the small-scale honey producer has a place in agriculture and our markets.

I understand there may be concern over some of the issues raised in the resolution. We carefully considered the concerns of our members in drafting the document. In our effort to achieve change, we realize the need for negotiation and compromise and drafted the resolution accordingly. Perhaps the larger question is, does the ability of small-scale producers to economically compete in the retail market help or hinder the Florida State Beekeepers Association? I encourage you to discuss this issue with your members at the local level and support our effort to advance beekeeping in Florida.

Respectfully,

Tony Hogg
Secretary
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