



State of Utah

GARY R. HERBERT
Governor

SPENCER J. COX
Lieutenant Governor

Department of Agriculture and Food

LUANN ADAMS
Commissioner

SCOTT ERICSON
Deputy Commissioner

News Release

Contact: Jack Wilbur (801) 538-7098
Cell (801) 243-2801
Joey Caputo (801) 538-4912

January 28, 2016

Infrared Camera Technology Aids Honeybee Health UDAF to demonstrate new winter bee inspection program

Most people don't think of winter as a good time to inspect honey bee colonies, but apiary inspectors at the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food are actively inspecting hives this winter, thanks to a partnership with the University of Utah.

The U. College of Biology, using a grant from the Sustainable Campus Initiative Fund, has loaned UDAF an infrared camera that allows inspectors to "see" into hives without opening the hives, which may expose living bees to freezing temperatures. The FLIR camera detects heat signatures in the hive. If the hive has a strong heat signature they will leave it alone. If they believe the hive is dead or severely compromised they will, with permission of the beekeeper, open the hive, try to determine the cause and take bee samples for analysis. If foulbrood or another contagious disease is found, inspectors will recommend steps beekeepers can take before the weather warms to prevent the spread of the disease.

The infrared camera winter beehive health inspection program is among the first of its kind nationally and one of many free services available to registered beekeepers to help them better manage their colonies.

Some of the reasons hives die in the winter include Varroamite infestation, Nosema infection, water leaking into the hive from melting snow or ice, snow or another obstruction blocking the entrance, and inadequate nutrition for the winter. Once the cause of the "dead out" is determined, inspectors will provide beekeepers with a list of steps they can take to avoid future winter losses.

UDAF honey bee inspectors will demonstrate the IR camera and go through the winter inspection process with the news media. In order to get the best images, the demonstration will take place at dusk. A living hive with a strong heat signature and a weaker or dead hive will be present to show the contrast in images.

What: Winter Honey Bee Inspection Demonstration

When: 5:30 pm. Wednesday February 3, 2016

Where: 1445 W Crystal Ave, West Valley City

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Above is an image from the FLIR camera that shows a live hive. The bright yellow in the top part of the rectangle box is where the living bees are clustered. The box to the right show a hive with little or no life. The darker the color, the colder the temperature.

