

January 15, 2014

The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

RE: Request for Honey Bee Nutrition and Forage Summit

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The undersigned respectfully urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to convene a Honey Bee Nutrition and Forage Summit. The importance of nutrition and forage to the health of honey bees and sustainable agricultural pollination services is well documented.

We greatly appreciate the leadership actions you are already taking on honey bee and pollinator health, including a productive Honey Bee Health Conference co-convened by EPA and USDA, ARS in October 2012 scheduled to coincide with the 2012 North American Pollinator Protection Campaign International Conference; a honey bee forage effort being developed for launch by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for the spring 2014 planting season in selected states; and a Varroa Mite Summit currently being organized by USDA for early 2014.

We respectfully suggest that USDA consider scheduling a Bee Nutrition and Forage Summit in conjunction with the October 21-23, 2014 meeting of the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC), which will be hosted by USDA.

We believe the Bee Nutrition and Forage Summit will serve as the catalyst for collaborative efforts resulting in outcomes which provide real improvements in bee health, due to increased understanding of the nutritional needs of honey bees and increased opportunities to access and improve bee forage on the American landscape.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and stand ready to work with USDA in moving forward with a Bee Nutrition and Forage Summit. Tom Van Arsdall, Pollinator Partnership, at tva@pollinator.org or (703) 509-4746, is the contact for additional information or to facilitate any follow up communications with signatories.

Sincerely,

Pollinator Partnership
American Beekeeping Federation
American Honey Producers Association
Agricultural Retailers Association
Almond Board of California
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Farmland Trust
American Seed Trade Association
American Society of Agronomy

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American Soybean Association
May Berenbaum, Ph.D., University of Illinois
Blue Diamond Growers
California Specialty Crops Council
California State Beekeepers Association
Crop Science Society of America
CropLife America
Keith S. Delaplane, Ph.D., University of Georgia
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Häagen-Dazs Ice Cream, Nestlé Dreyer's Ice Cream
David Inouye, Ph.D., University of Maryland
Jasper Wyman & Son, Inc.
Eric Mussen, Ph.D.
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Grange
National Pest Management Association
National Sunflower Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wildlife Federation
Northeast-Midwest Institute
Ocean Spray Cranberries
Pheasants Forever
Quail Forever
Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE)
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
Marla Spivak, Ph.D., Bee Lab-University of Minnesota
St. Louis Zoo
The Beez Kneez, LLC of Minneapolis, MN
The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation
U.S. Apple Association
U.S. Canola Association
United Fresh Produce Association
United Policy, LLC, Dave White, President, Former Chief, NRCS
Western Growers
Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine

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cc: Krysta Harden, Deputy Secretary
Ann Mills, Acting Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment
Cathie Woteki, Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics
Jason Weller, Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Juan Garcia, Administrator, Farm Service Agency
Tom Tidwell, Chief, U.S. Forest Service
Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture
Dr. Caird Rexroad, Acting Administrator, Agricultural Research Service
Kevin Shea, Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Dr. Kevin Hackett, Agricultural Research Service
Dr. Mary Purcell-Miramontes, National Institute of Food and Agriculture
Dr. Jeffery Pettis, Agricultural Research Service