

# Africanized honey bee

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 USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). APHIS inspectors, posted at ports of entry all around the country, have orders to destroy all bees they intercept in arriving airplanes and ships and in commercial cargo and passenger baggage.

A watch is out as well for hybridized bees moving north on their own. Experience has shown they come in small colonies that would be fairly easy to kill or control. USDA's Agricultural Research Service has teams of bee scientists that study the exact causes of swarming

and the rate of travel. The new information will help make the lookout effective.

With regard to the concern about how harmful hybridized bees would be in the United States, there also is encouraging news. Beekeepers found that in the temperate climates of South America, Africanized bees act less aggressively. They spread more slowly and keepers eliminate the more objectionable strains. Since the climate of the United States also is basically temperate, the hybridized strains that would develop here also are likely to be more tractable.

Researchers are working on further ways to breed undesirable traits out of Africanized bees. USDA scientists, working with officials along the northern spread of the Africanized bee, study the bee's brood cycle, mating, stinging behavior, and response to various management techniques. The most famous of these studies uses 80 colonies of highly Africanized wild bees now located in French Guyana. The study site can be moved to Venezuela or even further along the front of the migratory advance.

Research workers at USDA laboratories in the United States and several state universities also have been studying domestic bees to see how they live and operate. The scientists are collecting facts about the bee's chemical alarm

systems, stinging behavior, clustering habits, tendency to fly at various temperatures, and mating habits — information that can be applied to Africanized strains.

Researchers also are refining artificial insemination techniques to counter the aggressive mating behavior of Africanized strains. Drones from Africanized colonies tend to chase domestic queens on their mating flights and often outcompete domestic drones. Queens mate only during a once-in-

a-lifetime mating period. So crossed matings result in a queen's producing hybridized offspring for her entire reproductive life. Practical artificial breeding of American bee colonies — the objective of the studies — would go a long way toward limiting the spread and impact of Africanized bee strains arriving in the United States.

Whether you are a beekeeper or a garden-tending homeowner, you don't have to be afraid of Africanized bees — not now and not later. You should,

however, face all encounters with bees calmly and carefully. If you are attacked, don't run, scream, or slap at bees. That only stimulates their defensive instinct.

Instead, stay calm and freeze. Bees tend to ignore motionless objects. Then look around for the reason behind the attack. If you spot their hive, slowly and gently move away, putting a building, bushes, or trees between yourself and the hive. Once bees no longer feel threatened, they will cease their attack.

## Awards presented

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change taking place. Optimism is the outlook for the future, he believes.

"Food can be used as a weapon to do good", Wenger explained. "Farmers have a tremendous potential to become involved generation after generation."

But, he went on, the returns from farming today are not what they should be. The problems concerning farming prices need to be solved.

One step in the right direction, Wenger believes, would be for farmers to try to understand urban problems as well as urban people to try to do the same with farmers. "What we need," he urged, "are bridges of communication."

Wenger went on to tell the farmers to become involved in politics. "Public officials are a reflection of those who elect them," he stated. "It is

important to put good politicians in office."

"Remember" Wenger concluded, "farmers are important. You should never underestimate the power you can have. But you must have people who understand farming in places to make decisions."



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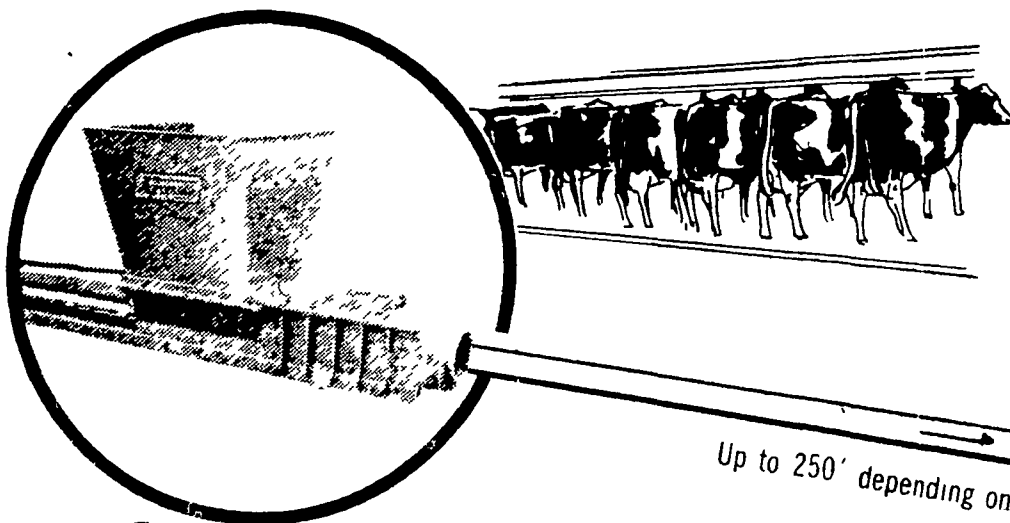
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