

'Killer Bees' still heading north

NEWARK, Del. — Aggressive Africanized bees that escaped 28 years ago from a laboratory in Brazil have now spread as far north as Panama and Costa Rica. A University of Delaware entomologist, Dr. Dewey Caron, has gone to Panama to assess the situation and collaborate on research that might ultimately help minimize damage.

As the Africanized bees move northward, they interbreed with local bee populations and pass on their aggressive characteristics. They swarm frequently, provoke easily, and tirelessly pursue anyone that disturbs them. These aggressive qualities have earned them the nickname "killer bees." Barring a research breakthrough, the bees are expected to reach the United States within the next five years. They might ultimately survive as far north as Delaware,

so anything Caron learns in Panama could prove useful here.

Caron first began studying the Panamanian beekeeping industry in 1981, before the Africanized bees arrived. Since then he has seen the bees caused serious problems for the general public, farmers, and beekeepers in particular.

Bee stings have become a public health problem in Panama. People have been hospitalized from stinging "accidents," with children, the sick and the elderly at particular risk. Although the average adult can withstand 500 or more stings, even a single sting is too much for the 1 percent of the population that is allergic to bee stings.

Chickens and other small animals have died from too many stings, and even large animals have been affected. Tethered horses have lost their lives from

bee attacks.

Rural Panamanians depend heavily on horses for transportation and agriculture, and the loss of one is serious indeed. But to attempt to untie a horse being attacked by killer bees is to risk one's own life.

Since the coming of the Africanized bees, farmers have also lost valuable pollination services. To pollinate some crops,


such as orchard fruits, farmers generally rent bees from beekeepers because orchards must be smaller and farther apart for successful natural pollination. But the Africanized bees are driving beekeepers out of business, not only because they're harder to handle, but also because they produce less honey, making them less profitable. Banks are no longer willing to lend money to

beekeepers, since the enterprise has now become risky. Before the bees arrived, Panama exported honey. Now honey production is down 50 percent, and the country cannot produce enough to meet its own needs.

In Panama, Caron will help beekeepers learn to adapt to the Africanized bees by taking more safety precautions, having more

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NO ATAQUE A LAS ABEJAS AFRICANIZADAS



<p>LA ABEJA AFRICANIZADA ESTA CON NOSOTROS</p> <p>La abeja africanizada es el cruce de la abeja africana para que escape del Brasil con la abeja Europea que se encuentra a su paso.</p> <p>Es mas agresiva.</p> <p>Es mas resistente a enfermedades y plagas.</p> <p>Aumentara la produccion agricola del pais con una mayor polinizacion.</p> <p>La abeja africanizada se debe considerar como un recurso para la produccion de alimentos.</p> <p>Los apicultores no traeran la abeja africanizada a nuestro pais. Ellos nos ayudaran en la solucion de posibles problemas.</p>	<p>PREVENGA ACCIDENTES QUE PUEDAN CAUSAR LOS ENJAMBRES</p> <p>No pase frente a ejemplares, evite los ruidos, no corra, no le tire piedras, alejese del sitio de su ubicacion.</p> <p>Cuando un enjambre este en vuelo, no se interponga en su camino.</p> <p>No trabaje ni se acerque a las Abejas si no sabe como hacerlo o carece de equipo de proteccion adecuada.</p> <p>Ubica tus apícolas retirados de viviendas y vías públicas por lo menos 200 metros.</p> <p>Elimine los soportes colectivos y utilice barreras vivas en tus apícolas.</p> <p>En caso de Emergencia llamar a los Bomberos y las Comunidades al Tecnico del MIDA.</p>
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Incrementar la cria de abejas es una necesidad del pais. Asesórese de los técnicos del Programa de Apicultura.

NOTA: En Caso de Picaduras Acuda a su Centro De Salud u Hospital Mas Cercano.

COMISION NACIONAL PARA EL CONTROL Y MANEJO DE LA ABEJA AFRICANIZADA EN PANAMA.

This Spanish language public safety poster warns Panamanians to steer clear of Africanized bees.

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