

Killer bees pose threat

PARK RIDGE, IL. — "Killer" bees discovered in California recently pose an "enormous" threat to agriculture, the nation's most important industry.

"More than \$40 billion worth of agricultural commodities a year are dependent on domestic bees for pollination," said Don Rawlins, American Farm Bureau natural and environmental resources director. "These 'Africanized' bees are not as efficient as the domesticated honeybees, pollinating fewer blossoms and causing reduced yields. The invaders readily interbreed with domestic bees, passing on undesirable traits to the progeny. Maybe worst of all, the Africanized bee carries a parasite, the varroa mite, that devastates honeybees, causing 90 to 95 percent fatalities." According to Rawlins, this is not the first time Africanized bees have been found in the U.S. "Two

swarms were detected on ships in the ports of Baltimore and Tampa several years ago. Both were promptly eradicated," he said.

He warned that extensive searches must be undertaken near the California site to make certain no other swarms are present. "A honeybee swarm will number in the hundreds. An Africanized queen only needs 20 or 30 workers to start a new colony. So Africanized colonies are smaller and harder to find, in addition to spreading more rapidly due to smaller population requirements," he said. Once found, the bees can easily be eradicated with several common pesticides.

The "killer" label is an exaggeration, Rawlins said. "The sting of an Africanized bee is no more poisonous or painful than that of a honeybee. After an Africanized bee stings its victim, however, it is believed that a

chemical is released that attracts and stimulates other Africanized bees, prompting them to attack, also."

Africanized bees look very similar to domestic bees and even trained entomologists must make 30 individual comparisons to tell the two varieties apart.

The aggressiveness traces back to the original swarm of African bees brought to Brazil in the 1950s by researchers. The bees escaped and spread northward over the decades.

Researchers, such as Dr. Orley Taylor of Kansas State University, predicted the arrival of Africanized bees in the U.S. by 1988. Rawlins said the bees found in an oil field in Kern County, California were probably brought in on equipment or machinery imported from Mexico, Costa Rica or other infested Central American countries.

Fayette learning center

UNIONTOWN, PA — The naming of the Study-Learning Center at the Fayette Campus of the Pennsylvania State University after J. Lewis Williams was approved by the Penn State Board of Trustees here today (July 13).

The facility, centrally located on the Fayette campus, is named after Williams, an alumnus, member of the board of trustees from 1955 through 1979, community leader and successful businessman.

A key figure in the founding of the Fayette Campus and a member of its Advisory Board for 19 years, Williams was named a distinguished alumnus of Penn State in 1970. He retired from the Board as trustee emeritus.

He combined a farm machinery dealership and a large dairy farm near Uniontown with service to the community, the University and agriculture.

A 1927 graduate of Penn State's

agriculture course, Williams was named "Superior Farmer" by the Greater Uniontown Chamber of Commerce in 1952 and "Master Farmer" by "Pennsylvania Farmer" magazine in 1955.

An honorary member of the Pennsylvania County Agents Association, he served as president of both the Fayette County and Southwestern Pennsylvania Holstein Breeder Association, the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association and the Atlantic Breeders Cooperative.

For 19 years he was the secretary-treasurer of the Pennsylvania Association of Artificial Breeding Cooperatives.

His service to the community included chairing the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority for more than a decade. He was also superintendent of the Fayette County Institutional District for 10 years and a county commissioner for eight years. He died on March 7, 1984.

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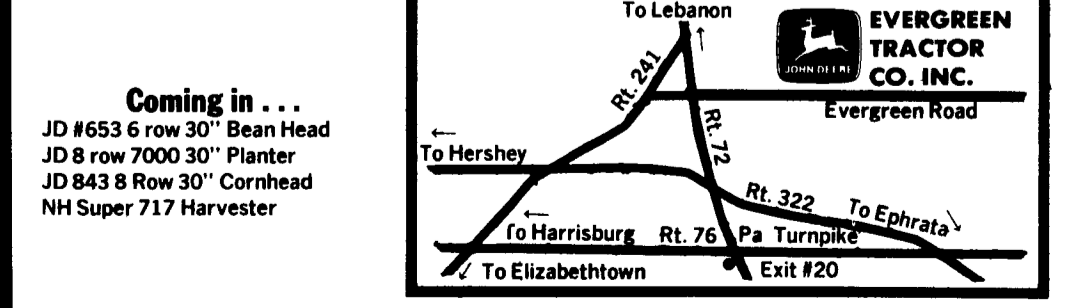
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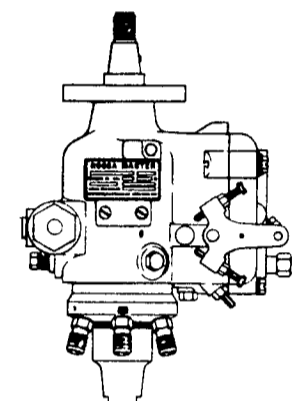
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