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**Beekeepers, Farmers and Applicators Must Now Bee Where!**

Sacramento, CA – Laws in place in California designed to protect bees as they work to pollinate almonds and other California specialty crops went into effect three years ago. This year, county officials will begin assessing civil penalties on those who aren’t following the new mandates.

Under these laws, all beekeepers operating in California are required each year to register their hives with the Agriculture Commissioner in their home county or the first county hives are placed. They must also notify the Ag Commissioner each time hives are moved and their beehives must be clearly marked with the name, address and phone number of the beekeeper. Meanwhile, farmers and pesticide applicators are required to notify beekeepers when they intend to apply any pesticide toxic to bees on a blossoming plant.

Fortunately, a system called Bee Where makes this process simple and works to effectively safeguard bees from pesticide incidents.

“It’s very important that bees are protected from accidental exposure to pesticides,” says Buzz Landon of Buzz’s Bees and president of the California State Beekeepers Association. “Bee Where is a GIS-mapping system designed to help keep track of where beehives are placed in orchards throughout the state and to alert farmers and pesticide businesses when bees are in the vicinity of a planned application.

“This year we’ve been told that county Ag Commissioners will begin assessing civil penalties for those who are not complying with the new law,” says Landon. “This should be an incentive for everyone to use Bee Where.”

Educating beekeepers about the new laws is challenging, especially because millions of bees are brought into California each year during the almond bloom. Many of these beekeepers who come into the state from across the nation are not aware of the new law. State officials have allowed time for people to become educated about the requirements and to get used to the Bee Where system. That grace period may now be over for those who don’t comply.

Beekeepers are required to register each year in California. They can do so in person at the Ag Commissioner’s office. But the beauty of Bee Where is that beekeepers can register directly on their computer, tablet or smartphone using one of the following two websites – [BeeWhere.calagpermits.org](http://beewhere.calagpermits.org/) or [www.beeckeck.org](http://www.beecheck.org/).

Pesticide applicators can also be subject to fines if they fail to use BeeWhere to run what’s called a ‘bee check’ before they apply any pesticide that may be toxic to bees. Beekeepers are working with the Almond Board of California and the Pesticide Applicators Professional Association (PAPA) to offer trainings about BeeWhere for beekeepers, growers and pesticide applicators.

PAPA will be holding a Zoom webinar February 2, which includes an overview of BeeWhere laws. Applicators can register [here](https://www.papaseminars.com/uploads/Seminars/11712.pdf). After this date, PAPA will make available free of charge, a recorded session on BeeWhere that provides one hour of continuing education units. The Almond Board will hold a [free webinar training](https://live-almonds-next.pantheonsite.io/sites/default/files/2022-02/Training%20Tuesday%20%286%29_1.pdf) on BeeWhere February 15 from 8 to 9:30 a.m.

A communications effort implemented by the California State Beekeepers Association and funded through a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant is working to make sure all parties know about Bee Where and how to follow the law.

A host of educational materials is available at [www.calstatebeekeepers.com/beewhere](http://www.calstatebeekeepers.com/beewhere). The information includes a tutorial [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JYxkAOWU6k&t=1s) that walks beekeepers through the process of registering their hives and shows them how to plot the location of their bees using the Bee Where system. An app that allows beekeepers to use their mobile phone to plot their beehives is also available.

A [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/BeeWhereCA/) has also been created to share information and provide additional education about Bee Where.

“Bee Where only works when everyone does their part,” says Landon. “Farmers should make sure that any beekeeper they hire to pollinate their crops are registered through Bee Where and that pesticide applicators run a bee check before they spray any pesticide that might be harmful to bees.”

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