



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Bee research to receive \$100,000 contribution from CoBank and American AgCredit**

**DENVER (February 3, 2015)** – The beekeeping industry’s battle against its leading insect nemesis is set to receive a boost, thanks to a recent \$100,000 contribution from two of the state’s largest agricultural lenders. The grant, from CoBank and American AgCredit, will fund research that will provide growers with healthier bees resulting in better pollination and increased crop yields.

The research is being conducted by Project Apis m., a non-profit organization that serves as a conduit between bee industry researchers and funding sources, which will use the donation to fund research into potentially new and innovative ways to control the Varroa mite. The pest, which weakens honey bees, reproduces quickly, and is capable of quickly spreading viruses within a bee colony, has grown to be a formidable threat to the bee industry since its discovery in the U.S. in 1987.

CoBank provides loans and other financial services to agricultural cooperatives and other agribusiness providers across the United States, including many in California. It is also the funding bank for Santa Rosa-based American AgCredit and other Farm Credit associations serving farmers, ranchers and growers throughout the state.

“We’re delighted to partner with American AgCredit in search of a solution to this major problem,” said Leili Ghazi, Western Region president for CoBank. “The mission of Farm Credit is to stand behind agriculture and the U.S. rural economy, and we hope the knowledge and insight gained from this research will reduce the threat to bee colonies on which so many producers depend.”

“For this project, we’re not only going to solicit scientists within our normal honey bee research institutions, but we’re going to approach entomologists who might be working on other pests, particularly mites in other agricultural or livestock areas,” says Christi Heintz, executive director of Project Apis m.

“The health of our insect pollinators is crucial to our farmers and to the American public,” said Rep. Jeff Denham, co-chair of the Congressional Pollinator Protection Caucus. “We must work to understand what’s causing the decline in health of our honey bee colonies. I look forward to seeing the funding for this research help us meet that goal.”

Project Apis m. derives its name from the scientific name for the European honey bee, *Apis mellifera*. Founded in 2006 and based in Paso Robles, Calif., it has steered more than \$3 million into research toward improving the health of honey bees and honey bee colonies.

#### **About CoBank**

CoBank is a \$102 billion cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America. The bank provides loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers in all 50 states. The bank also provides wholesale loans and other

financial services to affiliated Farm Credit associations serving more than 70,000 farmers, ranchers and other rural borrowers in 23 states around the country.

CoBank is a member of the Farm Credit System, a nationwide network of banks and retail lending associations chartered to support the borrowing needs of U.S. agriculture and the nation's rural economy. Headquartered outside Denver, Colorado, CoBank serves customers from regional banking centers across the U.S. and also maintains an international representative office in Singapore.

For more information about CoBank, visit the bank's web site at [www.cobank.com](http://www.cobank.com).

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