USDA United States Department of Agriculture

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Bee in the Know

Assistance for Honey Producers

From Plants to Product

The **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** has programs to help honey producers every step of the way — from plants to the final product. We have programs to help protect and conserve habitat, protect your investments and recover from disasters impacting your operation.

Pollinator Habitat

Honey Production

Your Business

Assistance for Pollinator Habitat

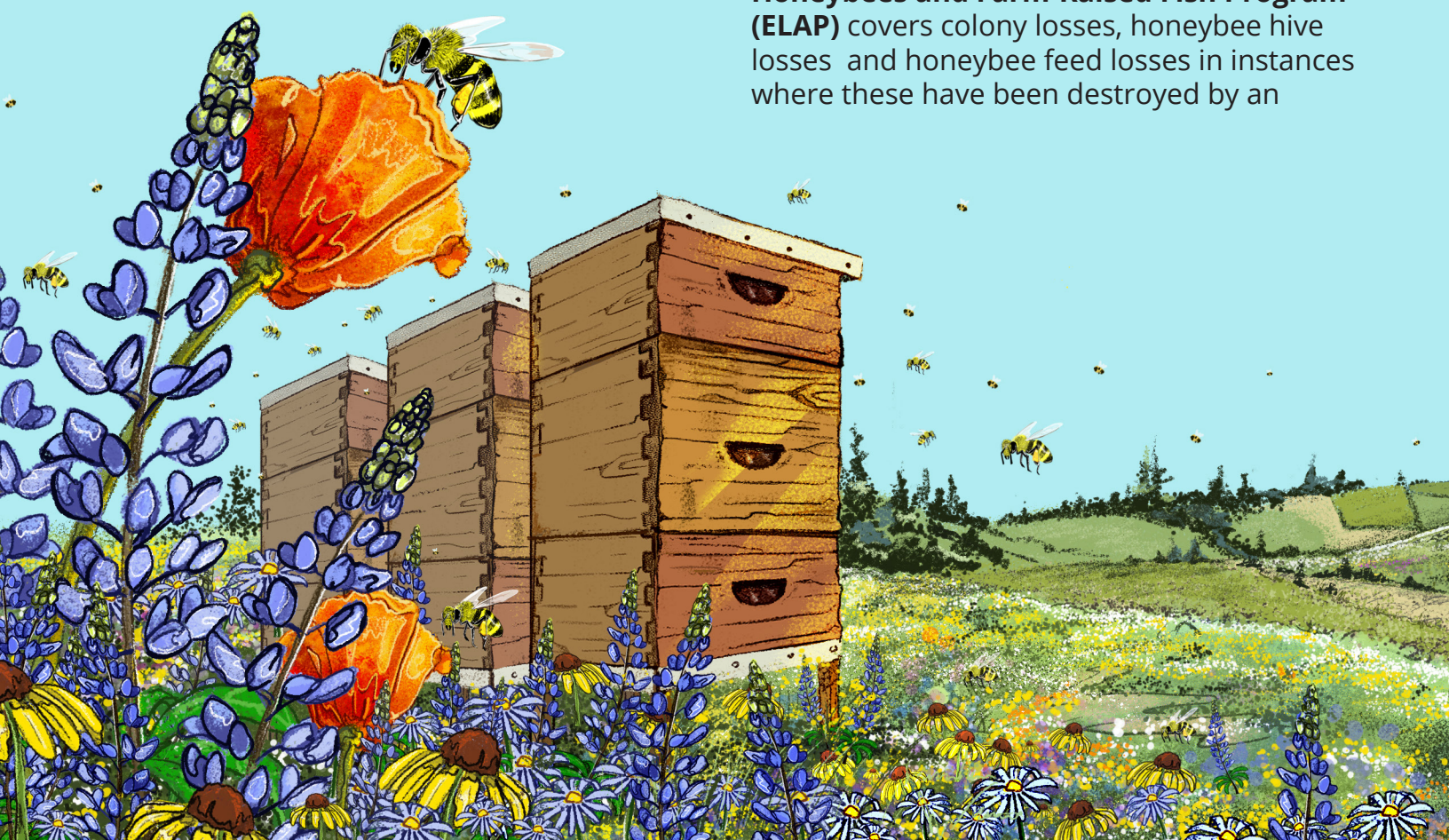
The **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** and the **USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)** provide support through technical and financial assistance to provide safe and diverse food sources for honeybees.

For example, NRCS helps producers implement voluntary conservation practices such as planting cover crops, wildflowers and native grasses in buffers and areas not in production as well as improving management of grazing lands.

In total, more than three dozen NRCS conservation practices provide benefits to pollinators like honeybees. The **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** and **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)** provide assistance to help implement these practices. FSA's **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover. Both NRCS and FSA programs encourage producers to plant appropriate grasses, wildflowers, trees and shrubs to establish wildlife habitat, diverse pasture and rangelands, filter strips or riparian buffers. USDA conservation lands offer tremendous benefits to pollinators that require diverse floral blooms over the entire growing season as well as safe placement of honeybee colonies.

Assistance for Honeybees

FSA's **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** covers colony losses, honeybee hive losses and honeybee feed losses in instances where these have been destroyed by an



eligible natural disaster or, in the case of colony losses, because of Colony Collapse Disorder. Colony losses must be in excess of normal mortality. Eligible honeybees include bees housed in a managed hive and used for honey production, pollination or honeybee breeding.

Assistance for Honey

FSA's **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** provides financial assistance to producers of table and non-table honey produced commercially for human consumption. Honey producers must apply for coverage and pay a service fee by the application closing date, which for honey is December 31 of the prior calendar year. Producers must timely file acreage (colony) reports and production records by reporting pounds of honey produced per colony of bees per crop year.

Honey from eligible floral sources and meeting FSA's storage requirements may be pledged as security for **Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL)**. These short-term loans provide interim financing to allow you to sell your product when market conditions are more favorable. Alternatively, **Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP)** may be available in lieu of securing a MAL. The final loan availability date is March 31 following the crop year.

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFLs) provide low-interest financing for equipment and structures needed for you to store, handle and/or transport your honey. Examples of eligible equipment include:

- A storage building for harvested honey.
- Equipment to maintain and monitor the quality of stored honey.
- Portable storage containers, essential to the proper storage of honey.
- Bulk tanks suitable for storing honey.
- Bottler systems for honey (excludes the honey containers).
- Equipment for moving honey, such as a forklift or hand truck.

Processing equipment, packing containers and storage space for bees or beehives are not eligible.

Assistance for Your Business

FSA offers **direct** and **guaranteed loans** to farmers and ranchers to promote, build and sustain family farms for a thriving agricultural economy. This includes farm operating and ownership loans. **Youth loans** are also available to those between the ages of 10 and 20 years of age for up to $5,000.

Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) provides a risk management safety net for all commodities on the farm under one insurance policy. The **Apiculture Pilot Insurance Rainfall Index Program (API)** provides a safety net for beekeepers' primary income sources – honey, pollen collection, wax, and breeding stock. You can buy a WFRP or an API policy from a crop insurance agent by the sales closing date for your county.

Don't Forget

- ❒ Establish a farm number with FSA if you're new to working with us.
- ❒ Report your honeybee colonies to FSA by January 2 each year. These reports verify the existence of colonies and are essential to program participation.
- ❒ Notify FSA when a loss occurs to your colonies, hives, or honeybee feed.
- ❒ Talk to NRCS and FSA to see how we can establish or enhance pollinators on your operation.
- ❒ Ask your crop insurance agent about risk management options for your operation.

Working with Us

You can learn more about USDA assistance for honey producers at your local USDA Service Center. Find your local USDA Service Center at **farmers.gov/service-locator.** If you're new to working with us, check out **farmers.gov/newfarmers** to learn how to get started.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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